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P A S S A G E S

F R O M

THE HISTORY OF LIBERTY.



PASSAGES

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FROM THE

HISTORY OF LIBERTY.

Τὸ εὐδαιμον τὸ ἐλείθερον, τὸ δὲ ἐλείθερον τὸ εὐψυχον κρίναντες.

Judging Happiness to be in Liberty, and Liberty to be in Excellence of Soul.

Pericles to the Athenians. Thucydides. II. 43.

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P R E F A C E.



IT is hardly necessary to explain the connection between the Passages, drawn all from one great stream of History, which are contained in this little volume. The efforts of the first Italian Reformers, here, of course, very briefly sketched, are illustrations of the isolation and travail of the Dark Ages. Wycliffe's work was a work of national principles, just beginning, in his time, to be acknowledged by his country of England. Savonarola's reforms express the desires for peace and purification, which were in all true hearts, during a period of so much strife and so many stains, as that period of transition from the Middle Ages to our Modern Times. The Castilian war is one among numerous histories concerning the same desires for juster principles and larger life, as they were in many places forced into struggles, tumultuous and unavailing.

Without turning away from abstract truths, that are vigorous and beautiful to all who have open souls, we may be glad to seek the greater power and completer beauty which belong to human examples. We begin with things individual to end with things general, and all our Cathedrals must be built up, column by column, stone by stone. It is after such simplest purposes that these passages are here put together. Although neither many in number, nor full in detail, they may nevertheless be as clear, separately, as a single diminutive volume can be made to comprehend. I wish to say one thing very plainly about them all, that their design, in being histori-

cal and in not being biographical, is no further concerned with the incidents of individual lives than as the individual lives are united by these incidents to the general history of Liberty and of Humanity.

We have claims, as Americans, upon History, that it should be written anew for us, after our own principles of thought and action. *Pulchrum est bene facere reipublicæ ; etiam bene dicere haud absurdum est.* This book, humble as it is, has been written in cordial sympathy with such desires as we may all be willing to follow, for nearer knowledge of some remembered and some forgotten names. Yet unless these pages bear a higher mark, unless the love, to which they give witness, be large as the love of humanity and pure as the love of God, it would be better that they were not printed, or even written at all.

I do not hesitate to add a few words not my own, even though they seem to make a profession, for which others may now have little concern : “ I constantly feel how overpowering the labor is and how many advantages I want ; yet I feel, too, that I have the love of History so strong in me, that I can write something which will be read, and which, I trust, will encourage the love of all things noble and just and wise and holy.” I ask only this, that Arnold’s words may be allowed to express the purposes of one who is Arnold’s pupil in heart.

SAMUEL ELIOT.

December 22, 1846.

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 ERRATA.

There are some corrections to be made in this volume, for the sake not only of accuracy but of common sense, as follows :

- Page 17, line 5, *read* doctrines of frugality and justice.
 " 26, line 4, *read* divisions *instead of* diversions.
 " 66, line 4, *read* younger *instead of* young.
 " 79, { line 7, *read* spiced *instead of* special.
 { " 8, *read* lore *instead of* love.
 " 92, line 1, *read* get *instead of* set.
 " 111, line 12, wonderful to all *instead of* wonderfully strange.
 " 128, in note, painful *instead of* fanciful.
 " 144, line 17, to have been *instead of* to be.

EARLY ITALIAN REFORMERS.



ARNALDO DA BRESCIA, DIED 1155.

GIOVANNI DI VICENZA, DIED 1281.

JACOPO DE' BUSSOLARI, DIED 1360.

Come s'impara
Quanto morte sia più che vita cara.
Guittone di Arezzo.

Men have discovered that something was done in this so-called dark time, (the Middle Ages,) which we in our bright time could not well dispense with. — *Professor Maurice.*

EARLY ITALIAN REFORMERS.

I.

THE Church of Rome, although now abandoned by many generations, was long ago the great strong-hold of humanity. Open to all men and to most opinions, liberal and progressive in its best influences, it united and protected Europe through those Middle Ages, when Europe was broken up in divisions, and surrendered to feudalism. While the Church was defending itself, it was also defending mankind. A poor carpenter's son, Hildebrand, became the great pope Gregory Seventh, and he, giving voice and action to demands which the age about him was prepared to sustain, declared his spiritual power independent of all temporal authority. The great purpose of Gregory's life was accomplished not long after his death, and Rome, set free, seemed destined to become again the mother of living

empires.* On her laws, society as well as religion, now depended; by her keys, it was believed, the world here and the world hereafter were unlocked to men; and to her altars was brought the worship of confiding hearts. Feudal force submitted, or seemed to submit, to Church-principles, and, as it were in emblem of these, there rose from out cold stones the Cathedral column and the Cathedral spire. To this time, even, we might have been among the dreamers and the pilgrims of Rome, had she done half she pretended to fulfil. But the day of triumph passed away, and the day of shame drew nigh. The principles which the Church professed, it presently upheld by force as much as by reason, and in abandoning its own laws, it divided and deceived its people. When it was lifted up above its enemies, when the strong and the weak were both at its mercy, then, even then, did it set itself up as strongest of all, and deny its better promises in injustice and in persecution. Rome rose, in the Dark Ages, by faith; she began to fall by superstition, even before the Dark Ages were gone; and as the world was for a season bound to her by charity, so by oppression was it sundered from her forever. Between the first Crusade against the Saracens

* It was in 1122, that Henry V., Emperor, formally yielded to Calixtus II., Pope, the claims which German Emperors had hitherto maintained to interference in Church elections. Gregory VII. died in 1085.

(in 1095) and the Crusade against the Albigensians (in 1209), there were but one hundred years; yet that single century separates catholic and uncatholic Rome.*

How the increasing vigor of Europe, grown already from youth towards maturity, should be turned to good things, without greater help from the Church, was apparently the great doubt of those doubtful times. But Europe was still ruled by feudal principles, just as it long had been, in every part of its society.† Kings, barons, and priests, at least, devoted themselves to feudality, seizing upon it as it were a cord by which they could be dragged on their own rugged ways. The points to which they were bent, although certainly wide enough apart, were in the same direction before them, so that in their struggling together, there was some progress towards our modern world, of which they never dreamed. Yet there was a strange confusion of various elements, that feudality could but painfully com-

* Ove 'l ben more e'l mal si nutre e cria. — *Petrarca, Son. CVII.*

† Les éléments même les plus étrangers à ce système (féodal) l'Eglise, les communes, la royauté, furent contraints de s'y accommoder; les églises devinrent suzeraines et vassales, les villes eurent des seigneurs et des vassaux, la royauté se cacha sous la suzeraineté. * * De même que tous les éléments généraux de la société entraient dans le cadre féodal, de même les moindres détails, les moindres faits de la vie commune devenaient matière de féodalité.—*Guizot, Civ. en Europe, Leçon IV.*

prehend. The world was made up of great barons and ambitious prelates, of troubled kings and tumultuous communities, of turbid thinkers and what our Chaucer calls "sheepy people;" all these were thrown together in one huge, tumbling heap, which feudality was to beat up with its "iron flail." Church became feudal and worldly; government was made up of much despotism and little law; so that the purity of religion and the knowledge of liberty were lost as soon as acquired.

In most states the people were of no possible importance, but followed carelessly after popes in whom they believed, or lords whom they feared. No other destiny was clear to them than the destiny of suffering.*

From all these sources, of good but more of evil, there sprang strife and destruction, desires and fears, almost without end. Men and things were all isolated. The principle of the age was feudality, and the real principle of feudality was isolation. The priest only was united with his brethren, his brother-priests, certainly not with his brother men. The noble, the burgher, and the husbandman were as far apart in purposes as if they belonged to different worlds. There was no unity of action, no unity of

* E la povera gente sbigottita

Ti scopre le sue piaghe a mille e mille.

Petrarca, Canz. VI.

thought; everything depended upon individuals;* each man was bound to his single work, but that work, in solitude or in the world, was not unwatched by Providence. There was want of repose, want of change, want of success; yet in spite of contrary currents, the great stream of human progress was flowing on. State and Church, if we may speak so generally, were then first brought near each other, but their approach was only accidental, and they were again more unhappily separated.† All that possessed the power to unite these parted and isolated interests, was fanatical enterprise, not only in such as the six great crusades, with which we are all familiar, but in such as the Flagellants or the Shepherds,‡ whose wild enthusiasm was common to their times. There was even a crusade of children, ninety thousand in number, who, with some grown men and women, set out from Germany,

* Il n'y avait aucun moyen de gouvernement central, permanent, indépendant. Il est clair que dans un tel système, aucun individu n'était en mesure * * de faire respecter de tous le droit général.—*Guizot, Civ. en Europe, Leçon IV.*

† "That new form [of society, following 'the destruction of the old Western empire,'] exhibited a marked and recognised division between the so-called secular and spiritual powers, and thereby has maintained in Christian Europe this unhappy distinction, which necessarily prevailed in the heathen empire between the church and the state; etc."—*Arnold, Preface to Hist. Rome, Vol. I.*

‡ Of which a brief and intelligible account may be found in Hallam's *Middle Ages*, Chap. ix. Pt. 1.

under the guidance, they believed to be inspired, of a child. They wandered as far as Genoa, but finding there that the sea could not be crossed by faith alone, they separated from each other, and were then, in great part, seized and sold to the Saracens as slaves. But this fanatic temper was far more savagely shown in the divisions which filled cities with strife, and families with misery. There is no better illustration of the spirit which prevailed in those passionate days, especially throughout Italy, than the story of Imilda Lambertazzi, the Juliet of Bologna. The enmities among the Bolognese were led in chief by the Lambertazzi and the Gieremei, two very principal families. Bonifazio Gieremei loved Imilda Lambertazzi, and was loved in return; but this "prodigious birth of love," far from persuading their kinsfolk to reconciliation, so enraged the brothers of Imilda, that they stabbed Bonifazio with a poisoned weapon, leaving their sister to die in sucking poison from the wound even such heart-devotion could not heal. The cruel death of that gallant lover, the vain sacrifice of that true woman, and the tumults which laid waste Bologna, when this sad story was known, are all peculiar to hate, discord, longing, love, such as then made up the changing scenes of life. There was something wrong in chivalry, that it could make men brave but not excellent, women charming but not virtuous. Its influence

was to fill the world with noise, and nothing more; and Livy's saying about the Gauls of ancient days, that they were a people born for useless tumults, [nata in vanos tumultus gens,] may be applied to the knights and dames of more recent times.* But chivalry professed great theories, and for them, at least, men may be grateful. If beauty or courage or piety could be followed ideally, they could be also followed really. The love, which was raised above all other things, was perfect in strength, in virtue, and in faith.

Suche love is goodly for to have ;
 Suche love maie the body save ;
 Suche love maie the soule amende ;
 The Highe God suche love us sende
 Forthwith ; the remenaunt of grace,
 So that above in thilke place,
 Where resteth love and all pees, [peace]
 Our joye maie be endeless.†

So in all things there was striving after ideal forms, which could not be seen without bringing light to eyes and hearts. Even to distracted feudal times, we owe many of our present fancies and present blessings. The grass grew again where hard-hoofed horses trod; industry

* [Chivalry,] "to me so hateful, because it is in direct opposition to the impartial justice of the Gospel, and its comprehensive feeling of equal brotherhood, and because it so fostered a sense of honor rather than a sense of duty."—*Arnold, Life and Corresp. Ch. V. Let. 5*; also see *Hist. Rome*, note to p. 476, 3d vol.

† John Gower, died 1408.

sprang up where it was more than once destroyed ; * and hopes crowded close with fears upon men's souls. As the old French Chronicler wrote *Les Gestes de Dieu par les Francs*, we can trace God's Achievements in the world's darkest years. Such a Divine Comedy as Dante wrote, such a Great Charter as King John gave to our English forefathers, were things gained for all ages. Little else than smoke may seem to have struggled forth from the shadowy mountain beyond the sea, but when we leave our daylight behind and climb up there in the night-time, we shall see convulsive flames, which in wilder hours, shone over earth and kindled heaven.

The end of feudality was sure to come, so soon as its work was done and humanity was becoming mature. It had never been much more than a heavy chain borne by society for the sake of some sort of union, and when it could hang together no longer, it dropped, and was soon rusted away. † One among those who first taught men to distrust the claims which feudality, in Church and State, made upon them, was Abélard. Ardent, attractive and selfish,

* Celui qui a, aura davantage ; celui qui manque aura toujours moins, si l'industrie ne jette un pont sur l'abîme qui sépare le pauvre et le riche.—*Michelet, Introd. à l'Hist. Universelle.*

† Tout en empruntant la forme féodale, les institutions, les éléments de la société qui n'étaient pas analogues au régime

early risen and early fallen, he was himself a representative of what was around him. To the five thousand disciples, who sat together at his feet, he spoke as they had heard no man speak before, of great duties and great rights, belonging to their own intellects. Yet when they listened with throbbing hearts for words which should teach them how to work out together the truths he had made them believe, they could hear no more than the empty echoes of his voice repeating what they did not need to be told again.

Italy was first* of all countries in the feudal age, although it was less connected than any other with feudality. The character of Italian cities in their early history, is very generally known to have been peculiar to them alone. Where nobles and priests and laborers were all living close within the same walls, there was, of course, fairer chance for justice, and even for some sort of equality, than where a people was scattered over a wide country, exposed to adventurous knights or marauding men at arms. Yet, strange at first to believe, there was no greater unity of spirit between different citizens, such as Florentines and Milanese, than between such serfs as dwelt far apart upon the plains of

féodal ne renonçaient pas à leur nature, à leur principe propre.—
Guizot, Civ. en Europe, Leçon IV.

* Giardin dell' impero, as Dante was proud to call it.

France. The isolation which feudal influences alone did not bring upon Italy, crept within the walls of its city-commonwealths, and ruled over them as triumphantly as if they had been city-despotisms. While they were thus divided by barriers stronger than the Apennines, there was much to fill them with passion and violence and distress. The Church of Rome by turns overshadowed Italy with fear, or brightened it with hope; but as her better purposes could have brought abundant blessings, so her evil influences came laden with desolating sorrows.* There seemed to be contradiction in all things; liberty dwelt side by side with tyranny, and the church was quite as much a den of thieves as the house of prayer. Still, along the Italian coast rolls a tideless sea, whose beauty might make a hermit wish to sail upon its waves; and back, but a few miles from the shore, are deep-buried valleys, where man's spirit is humbled by the severe solemnity of a mountain-land. Great hopes, divine aspirings, heart-breaking fears, and life-destroying failures belong to the whole history of Italy, but, more than all other times, to those in which Arnaldo da Brescia, Giovanni di Vicenza,

* Abbiamo dunque colla Chiesa e coi preti noi Italiani questo primo obbligo, d'essere diventati senza religione e cattivi; ma ne abbiamo un maggiore [maggiore!] il quale è cagione della rovina nostra. Questo è che la Chiesa ha tenuto e tiene questa nostra provincia divisa.—*Machiavelli, Disc. sop. Tito Livio. I. 12.*

and Jacopo de' Bussolari, her early reformers, lived and died. Italy was great, when Germany was shamed in the person of her Emperor;* when Spain was but a battle-field for Christians and Moors; when France was buffeted by her own feudal barons; when our mother country was unhonored and unknown. Commerce was covering such as the Venitians with wealth and renown; jurisprudence was drawing thousands to its fountain-head at Bologna; and art had chosen that, rather than any other land, to be its paradise. Cimabue's devout pictures, of which a king† was fain to say, that they, of all things, had given him greatest pleasure since he was king, these still make us believe how high humanity did then aspire. Petrarch, trying many ways, but in few only succeeding, brings down to us the hopes, the sorrows, and the songs of his mysterious times. Dante,‡ the exile and the lonely-hearted, can tell us, now, why men were restless, when there was much to give them contentment, and unfortunate, when we behold so much in them that was glorious.

One sees more easily what was to be done for Italy in the twelfth, thirteenth, or fourteenth

* When Henry VI. stood barefoot at Canossa, (1077,) or when, just one hundred years later, Frederic Barbarossa knelt on St. Mark's Square, (1177.)

† Charles of Anjou.

‡ D'ogni dolore ostello e chiave.

centuries, than how it was to be done. Popes were beginning to be too much concerned about mere temporal interests, to look out upon wider and remoter prospects. Emperors were soon too far abased in all men's eyes, to have any other influence than that of arms. Nor was it long after the beginning of this same period, that the liberties of the Italian free cities were lying, like corpses on a battle-field, at the mercy of the Signori, the Lords, who had every where prevailed against them. All the great powers seemed to have shrunk away, and men, more than ever individually dependent upon themselves, felt how sore was the need of strength, of spirit, of reform. The only active and stable element of society was in the religious orders of the Romish Church. They were to Italy of the Middle Ages, what Ephors or Augurs had been in ancient days, and from out their midst came Italy's earliest reformers. Their monasteries, hid from view like the Cyclops' dwelling of old, were filled with "sons of Heaven and Earth," busy in forging bolts to shake the world.* The works done in them would have been more perfect, had not they who labored too nearly resembled the Cyclops themselves, in having or using but a single eye. So that the great purposes which came from them were

* It is curious in reading two or three lines of Homer to carry out this comparison between the Cyclops and the monks of the Middle Ages. See *Odyssey*, ix., 106-115.

not always wise, and even the great deeds which were done through them were not always secure. Yet monasteries were sanctuaries of learning, when learning was most universally abandoned; schools of policy, when times were most dangerous; and, above all, asylums of charity, when poor people most needed protection. The prophets of the Dark Ages prepared themselves within convent-walls to go forth and do good to their fellow-beings.

II.

Arnaldo da Brescia was born in the beginning of the twelfth century. The strife between popes and emperors was already at an end, but it had left lessons of liberty which were not wholly lost. Love of freedom began to take the place of fanaticism, and all the more readily, that the impurities of Church and priesthood were swollen to loathsomeness during the long contests with the Empire. There were anti-popes and anti-factions in Rome, short-lived indeed, but desolating as though they had endured for centuries. Nobles were turbulent and people were ignorant; so that priests seemed to have their own way, when opposition was made to them by one among their own num-

ber. Arnaldo da Brescia's voice was bravely raised against violence and immorality. He resisted, almost alone, the new claims his Church was urging to full possession of ecclesiastical property, which it had hitherto been content to administer according to early laws. "My kingdom," said Arnaldo, in memory of his Divine Master, "My kingdom is not of this world, and this shall the Church follow." He gave expression to good desires still clinging about men's hearts. Not only to Church, but to all society, he would have brought back truth and love, the cornerstones of Christian freedom. He was the first and favorite pupil of Abélard, whose teachings then attracted all the best among young Italians to France. But Arnaldo's character was greatly different from that of his speculative and mystical teacher. He was a student, not only because he loved learning, but because he would make learning useful to the world in which he lived. His studies seem to have been connected with the reforms he planned, long before his first labors began in Brescia, where he took religious orders after his return from France. He preached of all things

"that give the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and its perfume ;"

but what most distinguished him was the manliness with which he resisted the oppressions and prodigalities of the bishop of Brescia. There was no one else who dared to rebuke Rome, itself, but

Arnaldo never feared. His pure life won him friends; his great eloquence brought him followers; but his self-denying truth was soon a mark to many enemies. As early as 1139, Arnaldo's doctrines were condemned by one of those Lateran Councils which would have put down humanity.* He was declared guilty of schism, ordered to cease from preaching, and then sentenced to exile. Rejected by Italy, by his own native land, he found peace and usefulness in Switzerland.

A Republican party had long existed in Rome. It recognized the superiority of the Emperor's temporal, and the Pope's spiritual powers, but did not know how to establish its own claims. Not only the people, but a great part of the nobility, exasperated beyond all prudence, rose against their pope, and so alarmed him, that he denied his own authority, and fled away from Rome. But he left his tumultuous subjects in a very unprofitable state of confusion and feebleness. Some among them remembered Arnaldo's name and teachings, at Brescia, and to him they turned in their own doubtfulness, summoning his presence and his counsel. He had been five years beyond the mountains, when the sound of these

* Even as Dante said, although with an unlike meaning :

Quando Laterano
Alle cose mortali andò di sopra.

faint and imploring voices came to him in exile ; and without hesitation he called some Swiss to follow him, and hastened with them to Rome. His energy soon breathed new life into hopes that had nearly perished without him, at their very birth. His objects were not to build up a democracy, but to form some sort of government which should be able to protect itself equally against imperial tyranny and papal wrong. A senate, already assembled, was by his advice increased in number and strengthened by laws. He made Consuls the chief magistrates of the State, and for their support revived the equestrian order, at least in name. All that he believed would make Rome glorious, he was earnest in planning, earnest in doing ; but although Rome, more easily than any other place on the earth, might have accepted the resurrection he attempted of ancient forms,* it was no time for the old Commonwealth to be renewed. The Capitol-rock,† was buried beneath long, heavy years. The purposes to which Arnaldo was now devoting himself, although chiefly political, were not altogether separated from more Christian reforms. The tumult and strife he found in Rome were, at his bidding, stilled. The authority he established was the authority of justice. The manners he formed by

* Questa provincia pare nata a resuscitare le cose morte.—*Machiavelli*.

† Capitoli immobile saxum.

his own example, were, although he succeeded but in part, the manners of a well-ordered people. He was the restorer of liberty, and the restorer of purity, so far as Rome was willing to profess and defend them. So passed eight full years.

The first thing done by English Pope Adrian, after his accession,* was to excommunicate Arnaldo da Brescia. Such an absurd sentence was easily resisted, so long as the Romans were faithful to him, who had done all for them. A few months later, one of the Cardinals having been killed in a street brawl, the Pope laid the city itself under an interdict, which he declared should continue in force until the man, who dared to oppose his will, was expelled or slain. One scarcely believes his eyes in reading that Arnaldo was driven away by the Romans, at the Pope's command, but it was really so; and after living among these weak-hearted men, their best benefactor, after giving Rome the peace fullest years of her mediæval history, Arnaldo went out, banished, insulted, deserted, to take refuge with some country-noblemen, who were still true to him. Frederic Barbarossa was just then coming, in youth and ambition, to put on his imperial crown in Rome. From him, Pope Adrian demanded assistance in crushing the violent tumults which

* Nicholas Breakspere, a vigorous and choleric English monk, was made Pope in 1153.

broke out after Arnaldo's departure, and Frederic was easily persuaded to do the Pope's bidding. The nobles, with whom Arnaldo believed himself secure, surrendered him to the Emperor's officers sent to seize him, and Rome, senate and people, abandoned him to meet his fate undefended, but not unmourned. The preacher of virtue, the worker-out of liberty, the one true heart that beat with perfect love for God and man, Arnaldo da Brescia, was burned upon the Piazza del Popolo (1155.) His ashes were thrown into the Tiber, and the better hopes of Rome were scattered to the winds.

But labors, like those in which Arnaldo died, do never utterly perish. His example, full of confidence while he lived, was full of consolation when he was dead. The Roman senate and people, unworthy such devotion as he gave them, submitted to the popes they could not resist without him. But in Arnaldo's native Lombardy, the same Emperor Frederic, who had sacrificed him to Pope Adrian, lost seven armies, one after another, in attempting to destroy all Lombard liberty, and was finally and utterly defeated at Legnano, twenty years after the death of Arnaldo. *L'uomo all' uom sobranza*—man prevaieth against man.

III.

It was in the earlier part of the following century (xiiith) that Giovanni di Vicenza preached peace to troubled times. Naples was wasted by the tumultuous contests among her nobility; Florence was the prey of blood-thirsty factions; Lombardy was divided by Guelph and Ghibeline wars; worse than all, Rome had unsheathed the flaming sword, with which persecutions and murders were to be dealt out to men, in religion's name. Italy, always in want of repose, never needed it more than then, and to direct the hopes, which good men could not help forming, there came to many places monks preaching against unnatural war. The prayer of the age, like Dante's, was for peace.

Giovanni di Vicenza, a Dominican friar, first preached, with any repute, at Bologna, (1233.) He was noble by birth, and young in years, perhaps not more than twenty, at that time. The eloquence of his days was a strange medley of sacred and profane things, but such were Giovanni's natural powers, that all the citizens and country people of Bologna believed in what he said to them, and followed where he led them "with cross and banners." An old chronicle of Bologna declares, that "every man, both great and small, went with the friar, blessing the name of Christ."

He was able to reconcile the oldest enemies, and to reform the oldest abuses, not only in Bologna, but throughout the greater part of Lombardy. Every people, among whom he went, welcomed him as if he had been a conqueror, with all sorts of rejoicing and submission. The magistrates of the cities, in which he preached, brought him their laws to be revised and framed for peace such as they had not hitherto known. Another Italian chronicler describes Giovanni as one who, "pleasing to God and to man, made many preachings through cities, villages, and camps; and with him was God." The scene of his greatest triumph was at Paquara, near Verona. One * of the last days in summer, four hundred thousand people, as some say, and certainly a greater multitude than had ever before been gathered in Lombardy, assembled on the plains about the town. They came, with magistrates and city-ensigns, from all the surrounding states, and most "for reverence sake," were barefoot and bareheaded. In the midst of this far-stretching crowd, their prophet Giovanni di Vicenza appeared upon a wooden platform, or rather observatory, built up ninety feet high. There he preached to them upon the words our Saviour spoke to His disciples: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," and even iron-armed soldiers who were there and

* The 23th of August, 1233.

heard him, were persuaded to confess the shame of strife and the beauty of love among men. That his words, however received, might not be forgotten, Giovanni proclaimed a universal treaty, comprehending all the chief cities of the north, which was accepted with solemn pledges by their people gathered around him. He, a Happy Warrior,

“Doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain.”

The spirit of war and wrong seemed to be successively exorcised; but it was only for a day, that the shadow of peace rested upon Italy.

There are different accounts, touching the remaining years of Giovanni's life, and it would be to no purpose for us to follow them in detail. Of one thing, however, there can be no doubt, that, the reformer proving unequal to his promises, his reforms were unenduring. To the great rise there succeeded a great fall. Giovanni became possessed of supreme authority in Vicenza and Verona, but instead of using it to the people's good, he grew lightheaded, and abused it, as we would fain think ignorantly, to the people's harm. The Paduans, who bore him some grudge, not only excited Vicenza to throw off his authority, but sent out troops against him, by whom he was taken and imprisoned. At the pope's entreaty, he was soon released, but we do not again meet his name in history, except in a few old chroni-

cles, that recount some missions, partly of peace and partly of church-persecution, in which he was employed by several successive popes, whose trust in him seems never to have been shaken. Without forgetting that it would be great simplicity in us to believe all simplicity in others true,* there is great temptation to declare that the errors of Giovanni di Vicenza have been cruelly exaggerated, and that he was honest and eloquent in purposes, he lacked wisdom and even perseverance to fulfil. The hopes he had aroused, were chilled and stupified by his fall.

IV.

Jacopo de' Bussolari is to be sought in Pavia, laboring there in love of country, towards the middle of the fourteenth century. The popes, who still pretended to be Italy's protectors, were living in what the Italians called their Babylonian exile at Avignon, black with debauchery and bigotry. The free governments of the Italian cities were mostly ruined by usurping lords, *Signori*, who dreaded the people as much as the people hated them. Some faithful defence was made for lib-

* La più grande di tutte le semplicità è credere che con la semplicità non vi possa essere falsità.—*Botta*.

erty's sake, in Florence and in Genoa; but Pisa, Bologna, Pavia, and many another were subdued and bound to their own shame. Rienzi would have restored the old glory of Rome, (1347,) but he was neither constant nor bold enough to succeed, and although his story is full of attractive interest, it is only *magni nominis umbra*, a shade rather than a light upon dark times. Jacopo de' Bussolari had a nobler heart and a wiser head than Rienzi; but even his earnest labors are no more than a promise of all that might have been given to Italy.

The Visconti, to whom most of the northern cities were submitted, resolved to bring all Italy beneath their dominion. One of the first attacks they made was upon the Beccaria, nobles, who had long governed Pavia, as lieutenants to the Visconti, and who were now allied with several neighboring families to prevent any increase of the Visconti's power. About the same time that the siege of Pavia was begun, (1356,) Jacopo de' Bussolari, an Augustine monk, was called from the seclusion in which his youth and manhood had been spent, and ordered by his superiors to preach among the Pavians, then a corrupt, feeble, and divided people, whose evil-minded masters were the Beccaria. Jacopo was eloquent and enthusiastic, or he would not have been chosen for such a mission. He soon proved the strength of his mind and the piety of his heart. The chief

members of the ruling family came to hear him, when their example had been anticipated by crowds of the common people. The friar spoke against the vices and diversions of the city; urging upon all who heard him the love of freedom and the love of country, which lead to or spring from the love of religion. His energies were not confined to his convent-life, nor yet to his pulpit-preachings, but throughout the siege which Pavia was with difficulty bearing, Jacopo was in the people's midst, their leader and their counsellor. The Beccaria began to fear his bold enthusiasm, and would have privately assassinated him, had he not been protected by well-armed citizens, who henceforth kept close to him as his guards. It was then Jacopo's turn to fear the Beccaria, and to get them out of the way; so, at his call, the people rose against their lords, and drove them from the city they had ruled, "as with a spell," now broken. The Visconti were put in possession of all the fortresses commanding the Pavian territory, and the siege of the city itself was pressed with fresh resolution. But the citizens, within,

More brave for this, that they had much to love,
found new hope in the freedom they had suddenly won. The castle, in which their tyrants had been secure, was destroyed, and, as if from its ruins, were built up good works of government and protection. The city walls were more strongly de-

fended than ever, and when the Visconti made peace with the lords, to whom the Beccaria family had been allied, they made peace also with the magistrates of Pavia, acknowledging the free institutions which Jacopo de' Bussolari had led the people in establishing. Pavia was a changed place, not only in government but in society. Instead of the quarrelsome, riotous citizens, who had abandoned virtue when they abandoned independence, years before, there was now a devout and peaceful people, whose lives were examples unto all their countrymen. But neither this peace nor this devotion was to last long. The Visconti hankered after the city so near their own Milan, and freed now from other enemies, they turned their arms once more against Pavia, three years later than the first siege, (1359.) The Pavians were true to themselves and to their friar Jacopo. They renounced luxury and indolence to devote wealth and energy to defend their threatened homes; but unprotected without the walls, they could scarcely prolong their defence from within. While the Visconti's forces were every day increased, and the attacks they made were every day more resolute, an epidemic disease broke out among the Pavians, making resistance altogether hopeless. Jacopo de' Bussolari, who had animated his people in many combats, sustained them in their last defeat, and obtained from the conquerors a promise of protection to the govern-

ment and of amnesty to the people. The city was forthwith surrendered, and as the Visconti's promises were forthwith broken, Pavia was not only conquered but utterly ruined. Its dearly valued laws were torn down, and a new fortress was built up for foreign lords to occupy. The best citizens were punished for their brief independence, by death or exile, and he who was first among them all, who had made no conditions for himself, when his people were subdued, was taken to Milan, and soon after thrown into a convent-dungeon at Verceil, where he died. But such a story as that of Jacopo de' Bussolari, however briefly told, is "glory, permanent and bright," to the land which gave him birth, and to which he unhesitatingly gave his life in return.

V.

Such were these three reformers, who labored single-handed and died undefended, as the ages, to which they belonged, required. It was not that they tried too much or too little; that their purposes were different and their examples separated by time; but that the thoughts of their hearts could never be the works of their hands, so long as they thought and worked alone. No marvel,

indeed, that men doubted them and abandoned them ; no greater marvel that there were some who loved and believed them to be true. But in doubt or love, in weal or woe, their names, such as we have read, can never be "dead nor unprofitable," while the stars shine above, and the world beneath them moves on. *E pur si muove*, and it moves still ! as Galileo declared at the very moment of his own dishonor. The memories of Arnaldo da Brescia and Jacopo de' Bussolari, if men be not ungrateful, will

"but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts
Which overpower all others, and conduct
The world at last to freedom."

One of the clearest lessons taught by History is, that there can be no such thing as failure in great purposes. So long as truth and charity are joined together in human lives, there need be no fear for toil wasted or faith sacrificed. It is when truth is degraded to union with coarseness and violence, when confidence struggles into impatience and intolerance, that there can be no great purposes planned, no great deeds worked by men.

JOHN DE WYCLIFFE.



1324-1384.

As it is wryten in the book of the wordes of Isaye the profete,
the voyes of a cryer in desert, make ye redy the waye of the Lord,
make ye His pathes right.—*Wycliffe's Translation.*

And yet in prizing justly the indispensable blessings of the New,
let us not be unjust to the Old.—*Carlyle.* [*Hero-Worship.*]

JOHN DE WYCLIFFE.

I.

A GREAT man, like John de Wycliffe, speaks and acts in harmony with his own times; something, therefore, of them must be known, if we would know anything of him. Not even the Poet, he whose language is most universal, can be comprehended, unless to the reading of his poetry be added the reading of a little history. The secret of all labor is two-fold: inspiration, thought, will, comes from heaven; sympathy, help, endurance, must be found on earth. God gives His blessing to man by joining together divine and human aid. "A host in himself," is literally a true saying about all great men; but just as the Great Captain does not fight his battles alone, so the Great Reformer does not do his work without some assistance, some influence from things and men that are about him in the world. It will not be

amiss for us to grope our way through some intricacies of the fourteenth century, before walking side by side with Wycliffe through his long career. The chief interests with which we are now concerned are to be sought in Wycliffe's own country.

Edward the Third of England, a young and magnificent king, once summoned all the knights of Northern Europe to a tournament at Windsor. He had taken to himself the disputed title of King of France, and was determined to maintain it by strength of arms and abundance of shows. Chivalry, in his early reign, was like a great fire, to which all men were bringing fuel, though most among them were sadly scorched by its blaze. The many vices and the few virtues, of which chivalry was composed, were spread through England, as through Europe, and it was a chivalrous festival for the chivalrous order of the Garter, which King Edward announced at Windsor. The commonest thing then, was, that every knight should adore some lady more particularly than any other, and Edward professed to be in love with the Countess of Salisbury.* Once in a ball-room at Court, this fair Countess dropped a garter, and when the king, himself stooping to take it up, saw that

* There is a charming story about the beginning of his love, in the 77th chap. of Froissart's Chronicles.

those near him were smiling, he said good-humoredly, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, and pleased with his own gallantry, he declared that those words and that garter should form his and his knights' device. The order of the Garter, still the great distinction of the English nobility, was forthwith established at Windsor, the royal residence, whose luxuries were then beyond any that had been seen there before. Among many things there was a table, reported to be two hundred feet in diameter, heaped up daily with meat and drink for all common courtiers. Knights, of names no longer remembered, and dames, of beauty yet imaged in the faces of English women, came to Edward's festival, with squires, citizens, and even country folk, to see and share long days of rejoicing. The tournament was the favorite expression of feudal spirit, and to the lance's point, we may say, were gathered all the extravagances of dress and adventure which marked the feudal age. An old monk has left us a sketch of costumes, which may stand as a sketch of all festival doings. There were "diverse shapes and disguisings of clothing, now long, now large, now wide, now strait,—and every day clothing new and destitute and divest of all honesty of array or good usages—all so nagged and knib on every side, and all so shattered and also buttoned, that they seemed more like to tormentors in their clothing, and also in their shoeing and other array,

than they seemed to be like men.”* It was a time when not only knights errant but dames errant, armed with spears and poniards, were wandering about England. All society was full of shows and confusions and wrongs. The armor which men wore was an emblem of their lives, glittering, heavy and hollow-hearted. Man’s highest triumph was fixed in tourneys and intrigues; and woman followed, seeking nothing worthier for herself than that man should live or die as she smiled or frowned. Chaucer, a boy still when the Garter festival happened at Windsor, gives in few lines (in the *Knichtes Tale*) the whole spirit of such scenes where bloodshed seems to us to have triumphed over honor, and ferocity to have overcome the gentle charities of human hearts.

We need not follow Edward closely in his French wars, although it is well to remember their events as happening in the time of Wycliffe’s youth. The battle of Crécy gained by the English over the French king Philip, was one for which no enthusiasm could, in feudal days, be unseemly. The feats of arms done in France were brave stories for chronicler or minstrel; yet Edward’s court at home was always splendid

* It was not a bad rhyme that ran among the Scots :

“ Long beirds hertiless,
Peynted hoods witless,
Gay cotes graceless,
Maketh Englande thriftless.”

as his camp abroad. The nobles of all England and of the large part of France, then in his possession, were gathered round the throne of the English king. Every year seemed to set new jewels in Edward's crown, and he wore it so well, that we need not be amazed, if men were dazzled and subdued. The English people trusted in their king, not only as their chieftain but their protector. Edward's heart was really large, and if he gave much love to glory in war, he had some to give to glory in peace. The name of his son the Black Prince, is ever chivalrous in history: "Sweet son," said his father to him on the Crécy battle-field, "Sweet son, God give you good perseverance; you are my son, for most loyally have you acquitted yourself this day; you are worthy to be a sovereign." The son was then fifteen, and the father but thirty-three years old. Edward's queen, Philippa, was a noble-hearted woman, true to honor and to mercy. She was with the English army when Calais surrendered, and it was she, as we still love to read, who pleaded for the lives of six brave-hearted burghers, brought barefoot and haltered, to be slain for the defence they had made of their homes. Edward the Third was more inclined to compassion than most kings or most knights in those feudal days, and the brilliancy of his reign is not like a diamond set in rusted iron. His royal power was well nigh absolute, but it was used to the good as

often as to the harm of his subjects, and to say this, is, according to the circumstances of his times, to say that he was a right-minded and popular monarch. Many of the older feudal troubles were cleared away during the half century of his dominion; new provisions were made by him for the exercise of justice; and the frequency of his parliaments is proof enough, in itself, that although he did much according to his own will, he was still ready to consult other wills than his in governing his kingdom. Edward's reign was a national one; his victories abroad and his magnificence at home were the pride of Englishmen. Even the lower classes, with all their miseries, were able to share in his harvest-times. He took from amongst them his soldiers and his dashing archers, and their "sinewy arms," their cheerful spirits, did him good service both in wars and festivals. The pages he fills in history, as chief among a growing people, are glowing with animation and renown; and although we are not to call him a great man, because he was a gallant knight, we need not fear to recognize Edward the Third as, for his years, a good English king.

There came a check to tournaments and to wars, when the great pestilence of 1348-9 fell, like a thunderbolt, upon the court and armies and people of England. Many old accounts are still left of the violence with which it spread from one

country to another, "soe wasting the worlde that not a third part of mankind hath survived." The mortality was naturally greatest amongst the poor, who died by hundreds and thousands in close dwellings, which were like hotbeds of rank and fatal disease.* But mortality was less an evil than the utter annihilation of all natural and moral affections which was brought about by the long continuing pestilence. We can read of sons forsaking their fathers, mothers flying from their children, friends sundered, crimes done in open day, defiance of man and of God,—and, after all, believe that death was better than such life as remained when the plague had passed away. The contrast between this and the Windsor festival is a fearful illustration of the separation between the rich and the poor, the barons and the peasants of England. The people proper were divided into citizens who had something, and laborers who had nothing. The peasant had long been articulated as a villein, or live-stock [*pecunia viva*] or even nothing more than land-raiment [*terræ vestitus*], and in either of these conditions, belonged to an estate, just as if he had been a tree to be cut or a sod of turf to be trampled down. Edward the Third's reign was also national in

* Within six months, sixty thousand died of the Plague in London alone, and a new cemetery of sixteen acres opened without the town was filled, for some time, at the rate of six hundred corpses daily.

this, that it was distinguished by the earliest enfranchisement of villeins, that is, of peasants enslaved. Just after the pestilence, when the number of laborers was very greatly diminished, are seen the first signs of relief coming to the poor. Wages rose, employment increased, labor, more needed, was also more respected, and the working people were then and thus set free from some of the burdens they had hitherto been forced to bear. But it is to be remembered, all through Wycliffe's life, that the character and condition of the lower classes were but very slowly improving, and that both were low enough, for long after this period. The "outlandish folk," as they were named, were like another race to the barons and even to the higher citizens. How they fared generally, may be better understood in hearing Froissart's story* of the sack of Limoges, a French city, which had rejected the authority of the Black Prince, in whose provinces it was situated, and as the historian says, "become French" again. The Prince was bitterly incensed against the Bishop of Limoges, "in whom he used to place great confidence," and against the towns-people all, swearing that they should pay dearly for their sedition. To march upon the city, besiege and win it back, was the work of little time; and "you would then have seen

* In his *Chronicles*, Chap. CCXC. Vol. I.

pillagers active to do mischief, running through the town, slaying men, women and children, according to their orders. It was a most melancholy business, for all ranks, ages and sexes cast themselves on their knees before the prince, begging for mercy; but he was so inflamed with passion and revenge, that he listened to none, but all were put to the sword, wherever they could be found, even those who were not guilty: for I know not," even old chivalrous Froissart confesses it, "I know not why the poor were not spared, who could not have had any part in this treason; but they suffered for it, and indeed more than those who had been the leaders of the treachery. There was not that day in the city of Limoges any heart so hardened, or that had any sense of religion, who did not deeply bewail the unfortunate events passing before their eyes, for upwards of three thousand men, women and children were put to death that day. God have mercy on their souls! for they were veritable martyrs." This is a long story, but it must be made even a little longer. In the same city of Limoges, and at the same time, were fourscore French knights and squires, all but three of whom were slain or made prisoners. These three defended themselves with gallant spirit to the last, "and ill did it betide those," so Froissart continues, "who approached too near. The prince, coming that way in his carriage, looked on the

combat with great pleasure, and enjoyed it so much, that his heart was softened and his anger appeased. After the combat had lasted a considerable time, the Frenchmen, with one accord, viewing their swords, said, 'my lords, we are yours: you have vanquished us: therefore act according to the law of arms.'” And the knights were saved, just when the poor people of Limoges had been destroyed. It was well that bravery, even bravery in battle, should be so honored, but it was the more ill that helpless wretchedness should be so cruelly abused; yet such was the custom of the times, turning to the strong man's profit and the poor man's loss. The whole country of England was at the mercy of a stout-armed baron. One singular law, that the highways should be cleared of wood and underbrush for two hundred feet on either side, in order to break up the ambushes which were laid every day against the unarmed walker or rider, is proof of the troubled lives which men were obliged to lead. The knight had his castle and his retainers, and was strong against any common foe; but the peasant's hut was unbarred, the peasant's wife could scarcely be called his own, and the little he had was often taken away. The upper citizens were more secure and far more important. English commerce was yearly extending itself, and the intercourse which was especially maintained with Flanders, contributed to increase not only

the wealth but the free spirit of Englishmen. Edward, the king, was known abroad by the name of "the Wool Merchant," because his revenues were chiefly derived from taxes upon wool, the great staple of his kingdom. Matthew of Westminster, a chronicler of these times, says that all the world was clothed in wool, grown in England and manufactured in Flanders.* The English merchant, possessed of largest property, was allowed by statute† to clothe himself as luxuriantly as any noble in the land. This seems insignificant now, but it was a nearer approach to equality among different classes than had been made in those days. Chaucer again comes to our aid in his description of a Franklin, as we should call him, a Country Squire :

An housholder, and that a grete was he ;
 Seint Julian he was in his contree.
 His brede, his ale was always after on [one] ;
 A better envyned [wine-stocked] was no where non.
 Withouten bake mete never was his hous
 Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteous,
 It snowed in his house of mete and drinke
 Of alle deintees that men coud of thinke.

* * * * *

His table, dormant [fixed] in his halle alway
 Stode redy covered alle the longe day.‡

* Tibi per orbem benedixerunt omnium latera nationum de tuis ovium velleribus calefacta.

† 37 Edward III.; that is, in the year 1364.

‡ The sketch is longer in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.

This is a jolly sketch, and makes one believe that the "good beef" and "good mutton" of Edward's reign were substantial comforts. Some energy of spirit existed among the better people, in spite of the untoward circumstances by which they were bound. There is a story belonging to a little later period, about John Philpot, "a worshipful citizen of London," that he equipped a fleet at his own expense and went out in pursuit of some pirates, Scotch, French and Spanish, who had done great damage along the coast of England. He beat them in fair fight, took back their booty from them, and sailed home again, to be brow-beaten himself, and threatened by the King's Council, for having dared to go upon so brave an adventure without authority. But the London citizens supported Philpot with all their strength, and he triumphed over the government, just as he had triumphed over the pirates before. This happened, however, after Edward's death, or John Philpot would never have been threatened and abused for his brave doings.

All this time, parliament was laying taxes, and doing little besides, because it possessed, in fact, very little power. The House of Lords was the king's Great Council, and to this fell the chief share in the government in England. The Commons were weak and ignorant, both in theory and in practice of legislation, and such few privileges as they possessed, were but poorly

maintained.* It was forty or fifty years after the Windsor festival, and the story is more illustrative of Richard's than Edward's reign, that a commoner, named Thomas Haxey, brought in a bill to control the expenses of the royal household. Richard the Second, Edward's grandson, was then king of England, and he, wild by nature, instantly demanded that not only the bill, but the person of Haxey should be surrendered to his pleasure; and the Commons yielded both, without even a pretence of resistance. Poor Haxey, condemned to die, was only saved by the united intercession of the Commons and the clergy; but even as the matter ended, it was to the loss of parliamentary privileges, at least during Richard's reign. Edward, more generous and more wise, gave much greater encouragement to the liberty of his people, and we shall have frequent occasion to remark the connection between Wycliffe's reforms and parliament-laws. Edward yielded to the spirit which prevailed about him, and obedience to him was obedience to national principles. Richard, his successor, set himself against the same current of progress, and was finally swept away, himself, after years of abject tyranny. Wycliffe was bold, far-sighted and persevering, yet he neither denied the monarchy which he found above him, nor sought to make a republic

* See *Hallam's Middle Ages*, Chap. viii. Part 3.

with the people he found far below him. Perhaps the reason of what seems his submission, or his forgetfulness, is already clear; perhaps a few words more in explanation of Wycliffe's purposes will be required.

No one can read the briefest history of the Dark Ages, without being struck by the confusion in which all elements of society were for a long time mingled. Great principles were then struggling together for life or death, and even as one prevailed above another, long ago, so are we affected and influenced, to this very day. What we are now has depended upon what men were in remoter times. One thing is plainly seen at the period to which we are returned, — the middle of the fourteenth century, — and that is, the strife, which was warm between Church and State, divided then just as they are now, and differently represented, only so far as the pope of Rome and his hierarchies, standing for the church, were then the single adversaries of kings and emperors, standing for the state. Very many questions follow close upon this simple statement, but for us they must be reduced to one, and that touches the separation, in character and influence, which existed between royal government and church government so far back as the fourteenth century.

The French historian Guizot, a calm, clear-headed man, declares monarchy to be "the in-

stitution which has chiefly contributed to the formation of modern society, to this present fusion of all social elements in two great powers, the government and the people.”* Such an opinion deserves contemplation and faith. We, here, looking upon monarchy, royalty, kingly power, no matter what name it bears or to what degree it may be maintained, think it all unnatural, oppressive and wrong. No doubt but that it might be so to us, but looking after it abroad, in other countries and in other years, we shall find, if we keep our eyes open, that without the influence which this much dreaded monarchy has had upon Europe, we should never have become the great and growing people that bears the name of America. It is a simple fact to be recorded, that monarchy is a great principle, an honorable and a Christian principle, which has been usefully and nobly developed, notwithstanding many extravagances and many cruelties which need not be alone remembered. This principle is the sovereignty, not of one man so much as of one order, one law. Law is king over all men and all things, so Pindar sang of old, and whether it take monarchical form as in Europe, or republican form as in America, it may always be believed to express the power of reason, justice and truth. Napoleon, when he declared himself to be the

* *Civilisation en Europe, Leçon IX.*

French people's "representative," meant this, that to him were entrusted their necessities, their rights and their desires. As Emperor, he was the centre of a larger circle than his own power or his own life described, one that comprehended the life and the power of his "great nation." Carry our thoughts back to the middle ages, and we discover that monarchy may be taken as the principle of unity and of nationality, at the very period, when society was fullest of division and incoherence. Among all the movements of English history, backwards or forwards, hitherwards or thitherwards, in the fourteenth century, whatever barons or clergy or people seem to have been doing, the king's power was steadily increasing. Nor is this to be deplored as hostile to the increase of liberty. That the wild barons were civilized, the greedy clergy purified, the poor people strengthened, that this was done, was through nothing on earth so much as the growth and fruitful action of the English monarchy. It has been necessary to say so much as this, in order to explain Wycliffe the reformer's unwillingness to touch the evils which were about the throne of England, at the very time when he was striking fast and far upon those which covered over the Church of Rome. The pope's power and the English king's were in direct opposition. Just as the nature of royalty was temperate, national, and progressive, the nature of pope-

dom was ungovernable, incongruous and retrograde.

The Roman Church was itself aiming at monarchy, temporal as well as spiritual, but the only end it could reach, hierocracy, or priest government, was actually hostile to the wants of much distracted times. Its theory was beautiful and holy; its authority was to sustain truth and be sustained by truth; its influence was to quicken the coming of justice and peace and even liberty. Yet all this was but a theory, and therefore a failure. The ideal Church of Rome was one to love and believe; alas! that the real Church of Rome was one to fear and abandon utterly. Earlier reformers labored to purify the church at whose altars they would have still worshipped; but when their labors were all proved vain, and the promises they had trusted, were again and again broken, there came later reformers who, not content to purify, would have destroyed all that had been built up in centuries of faith and sacrifice and falsehood. Wycliffe's place is between the earlier and the later. He took up the arms which others before him had laid down, and dealt some stronger blows than Rome had ever borne. He was neither the first, nor the last, who attacked popedom in the name of God and Liberty. Arnaldo da Brescia went before him two hundred years; Huss, Savonarola and Luther came after him. No single mind conceived, no single arm ac-

complished the great work of Protestantism, and although we give the praise to Luther, there are other souls than his to which we owe our redemption: Wycliffe was one of these. The course of reform has been, through all the world's history, a gradual course of human progress. As in the Athenian torch-race, one after another, bearing a lighted torch, has started for the goal, yet among all, none has borne away the perfect prize, for none has carried his torch lighted from the beginning to the end.

Et quasi cursores vitæ lampada trahunt ;

and each one has left to us some of that light by which we walk in sight and faith.

So, in the fourteenth century, the Roman Church was already proved unfaithful. Abandoning its moral power, and taking to worldly ventures, in which loss was sure, it was soon reduced to defend itself against the distrust and the enmity it aroused. Its progress once checked, it was turned back to stagnation and noxiousness. Religion became, as Sismondi* says, "an instrument which despots seized upon to turn against the people," and in being turned against the people, it was also turned against all institutions, all elements, all interests in society. This was but the natural consequence of principles changed,

* *Hist. des Républiques Ital.* Tome iv. p. 369.

of seeking after temporal rather than spiritual increase, of sacrifice to things of this world rather than devotion to hopes of Heaven. Clement Sixth, pope in 1345, published a bull, in which he not only set forth the merits of pilgrimages to Rome, but declaring that, if any died upon the way, their souls should be instantly received in Heaven, he dared to command the angels above to introduce his pilgrims' souls to the glory of Paradise.* The iniquity of superstition could be carried no further; and even in Clement's own time, such bulls as this were derided or deplored by all thinking men. A completer illustration of church practice and church principles, also, at that distant period, is the story of pope Celestin V., which is worth repeating here. At the close of the thirteenth century, some thirty years before Wycliffe's birth, there lived among the Abruzzi mountains, a poor, fasting, penance-doing hermit, Pietro di Morona, whose life was so austere, that common people believed him to have been born a full-grown and full-dressed monk. This hermit was chosen pope by the Roman Cardinals, who were weary with endeavors to elect one among themselves, and were

* Prorsus mandamus Angelis Paradisi quatenus animam illius a Purgatorio penitus absolutam in Paradisi gloriam introducant. The seare the very words of the bull, reported by Giannone.—*Storia Civile del Regno di Napoli*, Lib. 23, Cap. 8, § ii.

quite ready to accept any new master they could hope to turn into a servant to their profligate lives. Pietro, the hermit, would have fled when he heard of his election, but he was taken to Rome and forced to assume the sumptuous service of his palace and his church. Poor simple-hearted man, beset by place-seekers and wine-drinkers, he could not even fulfil the temporal claims of popedom, and after five months' bewilderment, he gave up his throne to Boniface Eighth, who straightway seized Celestin and imprisoned him until he died. In his fate Rome stands exposed, full of ambition, worldliness and crime.

The church could not change its place without losing both honor and dominion. Its chains were too weak, its festivals too insane, to insure human reverence or human love. There arose everywhere a spirit of hostility to the pretensions and perversions of Rome; in France with Philip the Fair, in Germany with Emperor Lewis of Bavaria, in England with many deep-feeling men, whose names, at least, shall, by and by, be repeated. Ockham, England's "Invincible Doctor," was foremost in sustaining civil against ecclesiastical power, and his promise to the Emperor Lewis, in whose service he died, is still to be remembered: "Defend me with your sword, and I will defend you with my pen." Nearer to Rome was heard the voice of Dante, speaking from out his tumultuous soul, words at which Rome must

have trembled.* Wycliffe came afterwards, bolder still, and dared to attack the Roman Church in all its strongholds of discipline and doctrine. He had a stern duty to fulfil, the duty of working out truth which other men were, as yet, only able to hear and perhaps to feel. He was neither without example nor without support, but his toils were lonely and uncertain to him, and to those around him. If we have, now, any idea of Wycliffe's country and Wycliffe's age, we shall be better able to understand Wycliffe's reforms, which can never be separated from the spirit about him and within him by which they were inspired.

The Church's yoke was especially grievous to England, where popedom had never been fully acknowledged, until King John, terrified by bulls of interdict and threats of invasion, had been base enough to surrender his kingdoms "in Fief to the Holy See," and to promise an annual tribute of a thousand marks, (not far from 70,000 dollars.) In Wycliffe's time, this tribute was flatly denied by King Edward, who declared his kingdom to be completely independent of Rome. To this Edward was led, not only by national spirit, which

Di oggimai, che la chiesa di Roma
Per confondere in se due reggimenti
Cade nel fango e se brutta e la soma.—*Purg.* xvi.

marks the greater part of his reign, but by knowledge of the position, which the popes were now occupying at Avignon, where they were for seventy years virtually dependent upon the French kings, all enemies to England. The shameful vices, by which popes, cardinals and priests were living, provoked not only England but the whole Christian world. Clement Sixth, the same who claimed authority over angels, was about as bad a pope as had ever been set above the faithful. He said of his predecessors that they had never known how to be popes, and seemed determined to prove his own calling to meanness, despotism and foul depravity.* Dante tells the whole story of Avignon in a single line :

Calcando i buoni e sollevando i pravi.†

From out this southern city, so full of crimes and ignominies, that Petrarch called it a hell of living

* Le peuple et la cour d'Avignon s'étaient fait des mœurs de ce qu'on regardait comme des vices chez les autres nations.—(*Sismondi, Hist. des Rép. Ital.* Tome iv. p. 366.) Petrarch's description (*Liber sine titulo*) is still more rude: Ubi nulla pietas, nulla charitas, nulla fides habitat,—ubi tumor, livor, luxus, avaritia cum artibus suis regnant,—ubi simplicitas amentia, malitia sapientia nomen habit,—ubi Deus spernitur, adoratur nummus, calcantur leges, irridentur boni, usque adeo, ut jam fere nullus qui irrideri possit appareat. * * * Nescio, fateor, an illius impudentia an patientia nostra sit turpior. *Bibamus papaliter*, drinking papally, was a common saying with all men inclined to extravagance or debauchery.

† Or Milton, as briefly :

“To good malignant, to bad men benign.”

Par. Lost, xii. 538.

men,* there swarmed forth priests, like stinging insects, to prey upon men, women and children, throughout all Europe. *Incrassati, impinguati, dilatati*,—fat, greasy and swollen, as Philip the Fair called them,—they covered England over, sucking revenues like blood, five times greater (in 1376) than the revenues of the crown. The priests and their master the pope were for having a hand in everything, interfering with justice, controlling marriage vows, claiming inheritances, and possessing all the valuable offices in Church and State that they could lay hold on. Half the kingdom, says the chronicler, was in their keeping, and they, as Wycliffe himself exclaimed, “were choked with the tallow of worldly goods, and consequently were Hypocrites and Antichrists.” In the old poem, called the Vision of Pierce Plowman, which was written at that same time, and especially directed against the corruptions among the clergy, are these three or four lines :

“ And now is religion a ridere, a romere by streets,
 A ledar of ladyes, and a lewd bigere [heggar] ;
 A prikere on a palfray from maner to maner,
 A hep of houndes after, as he a lord were.”

This is no exaggeration, or it would not be fit for our serious reading here. An Archbishop of York was wont to travel from one parish to another, with two hundred attendants and a pack of

* *Scelerum atque dedecorum omnium sentina atque ille viventium infernus.*—*Epis. sine titulo liber.*

hounds. A bishop of Ely actually excommunicated some persons for having stolen one of his falcons; with such a prelate, falconry must have been as much a part of his life as saying mass or preaching a sermon.* An abbot of St. Augustine had an installation-dinner of three thousand dishes, which were like a first course to the banquets and revelries which followed. A nobleman, Lord Morley, who had shot some game in a Bishop of Norwich's park, was condemned to do penance by walking "in his waistcoat, barehead and barefoot, with a wax-candle, weighing six pounds, lighted in his hand, through the streets of Norwich to the cathedral, there to beg pardon of the bishop in most humble posture and with most humble language." This, however, is more characteristic of the priest than the lord, for if the one were so arrogant, the other was seldom so submissive. A quarrel which King Edward had with one of the Archbishops of Canterbury, also chief minister to the crown,† whom the king deprived both of his state offices and church revenues, is proof of Edward's independence in matters ecclesiastical as well as matters civil. There is another story which sounds more like the

* One is reminded of a story repeated by Hallam (in his *Middle Ages*) that the monks of St. Denis demanded Charlemagne's permission to hunt as they pleased, for that the flesh of their game was good for their sick friars, while the skins could be used in covering the books in their library.

† John Stratford, Archbishop from 1333 to 1348.

pretences which Rome was making to absolute power, that a papal legate, who looked on quietly while some prisoners, taken in war, were executed, yet started fiercely from his seat, when a priest, convicted for great crime, was brought out to die, and, by threats and commands, actually saved the priest's life. Among these church swarms were several hundred thousand friars,—with whom we shall have more to do hereafter,—who pretended, especially, to be servants of God and friends of the poor. But there was no such thing then as friendship for the poor, excepting such as a generous king or a merciful baron or a solitary priest might give from a good heart. The clergy sheared much oftener than they fed their flocks, and men, generally, were wandering, separated, struggling with each other in a wide and changeful world.

Europe was just beginning to doubt the pope of Rome, England was just beginning to rejoice in progress, abroad and at home, when the great pestilence swept over Europe and over England. The misery it brought was so cruel, the desolation it left was so universal, that men began to fear either that the end of the world was at hand, or that Satan was let loose from the confinement in which he was supposed to have been bound for a thousand years. It was just the time for a great reformer to speak out what was in men's hearts. John de Wycliffe, then twenty-four years old, was

a scholar at Oxford, following the quiet ways in which scholars love to tread, apart from the world in daily habits, but not apart from it in sympathy or love. Wycliffe's soul, we doubt it not, shared in the conflicts around him. He felt that something was to be done, to be done, perhaps by him, and even in those dark days he began to prepare for the better days which were to come. Some years of silence passed; deep thought swelled to lofty purpose; the time for speech and action came, and Wycliffe lifted up his voice to declare the truth in which he trusted, and to which he devoted his strength and his hopes. The first profession of his purposes was made in a work called "The Last Age of the Church," published in 1356. It was chiefly to lament the pollution and demand the purification of the church that Wycliffe wrote, but in words like his, there were shapes to haunt popes, priests and men through all their evil doings. "The honors of Holy Church are given to unholy men; Priests do eat up the people as though it were bread; men of Holy Church shall be despised as carrion; the pestilent smiting together of people . . . the last tribulation of the Church . . . the final triumph of Antichrist, of whose approach God alone knoweth the period ;"*

* Once for all, it is needful to say that the quotations which are made from Wycliffe's writings throughout this sketch of his life, are generally taken at second-hand, and chiefly from a work of great industry, "The Life and Opinions of John de Wycliffe," &c. by Robert Vaughan, published in London, near twenty years ago.

about all these things, Wycliffe, young and unknown, spoke as boldly as if he had been a grey-haired prophet. It is plain that his faith in Rome was already shaken, and his hopes from the church were already failing. Old Chronicler Walsingham, Wycliffe's bitter enemy, writes that "at this time there arose, in Oxford, a tempestuous individual" [quidam borealis], who was none other than Wycliffe. To such men as Walsingham, any reformer would have been tempestuous, but here was one indeed, to fill priests "upon the great deep" with fear. The loosely spread sails of their church would soon be taken in, before the storm, of which some gusty words about a "Last Age" were the beginning.

II.

John de Wycliffe was born in 1324, three years before Edward the Third came to the English throne. His birth-place was Wycliffe, in the north of Yorkshire, where a manor-estate, of the same name, is supposed to have been possessed by his family. Nothing is known about his earliest years, and nothing can be conjectured about them with any certainty, except that he was well-born and well-bred. His studies, which could have

comprehended little more than grammar, were directed towards the Oxford University, where he entered himself in Queen's College, at the age of sixteen, (1340.) Almost immediately afterwards, he left Queen's for Merton College, and to this he seems to have attached himself until he went out, years later, into the world.

There were things, present and past, at Oxford, to quicken Wycliffe's growth in body and in mind. He was brought into connection, not only with hundreds and thousands of young men, students like himself, but with names and characters never separated from Oxford even to this day. Larger prospects were opened before him, and larger powers were expanded within him. He was learning from the Old how to plan, from the New how to fulfil. William Ockham, who had been educated, himself, at Merton College, died in 1347, when Wycliffe was more than old enough to comprehend all the energy with which the Invincible Doctor had combated the arbitrary and empty tendencies of philosophy. Grosseteste, of whom Wycliffe constantly and reverently speaks as "the grete clerke," had also been an Oxford scholar. At his death the pope [Innocent VI.] exclaimed "that his great enemy had departed;" for Grosseteste, although Bishop of Lincoln, had been a most resolute adversary to the evils of popedom. Bradwardine, from Oxford too, a gentle and pure spirited man, died in 1349. While

King Edward's confessor, he was twice elected Archbishop of Canterbury, before Edward would part with him. He was a priest after Wycliffe's own heart. A more famous prelate was Fitzralph, Archbishop of Armagh, who lived at the same period. He sacrificed peace, home and life to waging war with hosts of friars, whom Wycliffe was soon to assail. These men were chief among those nearest to Wycliffe in time and in principle, and for their examples,

"told in many place
That they were dead for love and truth,"

came much of that spirit with which he was himself filled.* Churchmen were scholars, and scholars were churchmen in Wycliffe's time. The great employment of men's minds was the scholastic philosophy, founded upon Aristotle and built up by generation after generation, into more fantastic forms than we can now conceive or understand. If Education be, as Plato said, the art of teaching men how to rejoice and how to mourn,

* Other names may be recalled. Roger Bacon, the Wonderful Doctor, who devoted his life to the enlargement of science beyond the frivolous bounds, in which its strength and fulness were wasting away, died thirty years before Wycliffe's birth. Richard Middleton, the Solid Doctor, was one of the greatest theologians of his times; he died in 1304. John Duns Scotus died in 1308, when he was but thirty-three years old. His name, the Subtle Doctor, describes the character of his mind and learning, yet he was far more serious in pursuing truth than most dialecticians of the Dark Ages. These three were all Franciscan friars, and all belonged to Oxford.

there was very little of it existing in the Middle Ages. The learning of the schools was centred in the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*; one comprehending the three greater sciences of grammar, rhetoric and logic; the other being made up of the four lesser sciences of music, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy. How much of either was gained, even by the most faithful students, is but a sorry question; yet men of learning wandered in other paths more barren even than these. Astrology and alchemy were favorite pursuits, and there is somewhere an account of two or three famous alchemists, who were imprisoned by Edward the Third, that they might be forced to labor for him. Everything was mystical and unsettled; the intellectual character of the whole fourteenth century may be summed up in desires to escape from old methods, which hung like fetters on science, poetry and art. Nothing came at first from these struggles but confusion; and some rough lines of an old poem [Pierce Plowman] upon theology, belong to much of the learning which men possessed in Wycliffe's days:

“ And theologie hath tised [vexed] me ten score tymes ;
The more I muse thereynne, the mystier it semyth,
And the depper [deeper] I dyvyne, the derker [darker] me it
thynketh.”

Yet deep thought was not always dark thought; and in the efforts which men were making towards light and understanding, we can see more

to admire than to ridicule, if we will. The influence of scholasticism upon Wycliffe is not to be set down for the influence of sluggishness. There was an onward and an upward movement through all the intellectual struggles of his times and of the times before him. The universities, all through Europe, were filled with students, striving consciously or unconsciously, against the foes of mind and the foes of heart. There was little peace in such lives as they led, and many among the old as well as among the young, were only "varlets who pretended to be scholars." Wycliffe went through many contentions and many toils for the sake of the principles in which he believed; but his life was as peaceful as it was possible for a brave life to be in such up-heaving times. He was greatly distinguished for his scholarship, and an earnest enemy of his doctrines wrote to the pope, "I have often stood amazed beyond measure at the excellence of his learning, the boldness of his declarations, the exactness of his authorities, and the strength of his arguments."* Wycliffe proved his learning by his own continued labors, which an uneducated or an ungifted man could never even have begun. Another testimony is in the often-quoted words of Knyghton, who wrote just after Wycliffe's death, with prejudice bitter

* This was Walden, an English monk, who marked himself by active hostility to Wycliffe's memory, at the Council of Constance, in 1415.

as gall against the reformer, and who nevertheless compelled himself to acknowledge that Wycliffe was "the very most eminent Doctor in those days."* But Wycliffe was not content with such learning as belonged to other men. He was able to meet them on their ground, but he walked surely on ground where they were not able to meet him. His scholarship was abundant and charitable, both in doing good to his countrymen and in helping him forwards to the great aims for which he studied and labored until he died. The earth was not then covered by "the still air of delightful studies," which scholars dream about, as though it were the air of Heaven. There was no deeper stillness in the studies, themselves, or in the contemplations that men pursued. The atmosphere, in which Wycliffe lived, was too hot and restless for him to breathe gently or purely, and it was from influences without, as well as from impulses within, that the scholar became the reformer. But with him "the wisdom of love" had surely preceded "the love of wisdom."

There were other bright lights about Wycliffe, which we may ourselves like to look back upon.

* Doctor in Theologia eminentissimus in diebus illis. In philosophia nulli reputabatur secundus, in scholasticis disciplinis incomparabilis. Hic maxime nitebatur aliorum ingenia subtilitate scientiæ et profunditate ingenii sui transcendere et ab opinionibus eorum variare. Such an eulogy is to be remembered in following Wycliffe further.

The poet Gower, born but a few years later, was among the first to make morality popular and poesy natural to Englishmen.* Chaucer was young still, but so kindred in many points is his spirit to the reformer's, that he is supposed, without other good reason, by several biographers, to have been one of Wycliffe's disciples. His cheerfulness and tenderness, his clear look into the troubles of his time, and his clear voice in speaking of them, are all like so much sympathy with his great countryman. Such poetry as he wrote in the early morning of English literature, was like life-waking sunshine. The English tongue was then loosened, and then first employed in courts and books. Its use quickened its growth, and its growth increased its use. Wycliffe, himself, did much to promote both; Gower set an example in his poems;† and in Chaucer there was opened a whole "well of English undefiled." We cannot too clearly remember the harmony between Wycliffe's mind and the great spirits of his age.

All this while, Wycliffe was living at Oxford,

* His work was illustrative of the times. "Gower's book took morality out of the hands of the monks . . . and brought it down to the usual habits . . . of the world. . . . He put English poetry into a better path than it had then visited; he gave it more imagery, dialogue, sentiment and natural incident, than it had been connected with until he wrote."—*Turner's Hist. of England*, Part v., Chap. 3.

† As he said,

"And for that few men endite
In our Englisshe." .

studying what was before him in time of meditation and resolution, which we will not call wasted, because we do not find him in the wide world. *Crescit occulto velut arbor ævo.* The tree grows silent and shadeless to maturity; man dwells alone before the world's claims crowd in upon him; but the aspirations of a true heart are just as sure as the growth of a sturdy tree. Wycliffe went about barefoot, clothed in a coarse russet robe, with serene expression on his lips, and watchful seriousness in his eyes. There were many around him, fellow-scholars and fellow-men; yet he was scarcely one of them; his studies were calmer and his thoughts were deeper than theirs. It was his life's spring-time, and the goodly reaping of riper years shows that there must have been goodly sowing.

III. 1356 – 1376.

The words which Wycliffe wrote upon the Last Age of the Church, resounding throughout Europe, declared the coming of a new enemy to the corruptions of Rome. He was thirty-two years old, young to begin such a work as his, but already prepared to labor for his earthly brethren and his Heavenly Father. He could not have known what was before him, but his purposes

would shape themselves gradually, and when once plain to him, there was nothing to turn him from them. Such longings as his lead to conceptions too clear and too earnest to be avoided or abandoned. It is unavailing to write, it is unavailing to read the story of any great man, unless we seek to share his "holy desires," his "good counsels," and his "just works," all, by our own inner sympathy and our own inner comprehension, apart from any words we write or any words we read. Yet if this be too much to claim, for Wycliffe's sake, we will not, surely, in following out his reforms, forget the spirit by which they were contrived, the spirit of a disturbed and mystical age.

The Catholic countries of Europe were filled with friars,—*religiosi vagabundi*, religious vagrants, as they are called in an old English statute,—whose practices and professions were in utter contradiction. The orders, to which they belonged, had been founded in love of purity and morality, at a time when men were working out their passions in religious as well as chivalrous life. But when these early principles were forgotten, when poverty and devotion were abandoned for luxury and profligacy, when friars were all "like spiders," as old Fox* says, "sucking things to poison," then they became hateful to the church and to the people of the church.

* In his Acts and Monuments of the Church.

The friars were neither monks nor priests, but mendicants, preaching and begging everywhere, just such vagrants as we should put in our almshouses, without much heed to the reverence which was really felt for them in other days. They were in the way of all classes; of the priesthood, because they fastened themselves upon church-offices and church-revenues; of the universities, because they interfered with studies, and corrupted scholars to follow them; of the nobles, because their pretensions were for democracy and common property; of the people, even, not only because they claimed the people's support, but because they brought sorrow and shame into the people's homes. Grosseteste compared them to dead bodies, come out from sepulchres, in grave-clothes, and living, as though they were possessed with devils, among men. They had been assailed by Fitzralph, the Archbishop, whose name has been mentioned a little before, and it was to him that Wycliffe succeeded. Chaucer, in his impetuous way, held that

“Friars and fiends are but little asunder,”—

and an old poem, called *Pierce the Plowman's Crede*, written in Wycliffe's time, describes a friar whose portrait belongs to the whole race:

“A great churl and a grim, growen as a tune,
With a face so fat as a full bladder,
Blowen brimful of breath and as a bag hung.”

To rid the world of these men was a Christian enterprise, which Wycliffe did not fear to begin

upon. He wrote a large tract, which he called his "Objections to Friars," and declared his aims to be not only for purifying, but for destroying all the orders in which they were numbered. How they had departed from their own professions, how they were enemies to the Gospel-spirit, how through their frenzy, the pope was raised not only above all civil authority, but even above the commands of Christ, — this, and more than this, is made plain by Wycliffe's "Objections," as it had never been before. Then, as Fox tells us, "the whole glut of Monks and begging Friars were set in a rage and madness, which (even as hornets with their sharp stings) did assail this good man on every side, fighting, it is said, for their Altars, Paunches and Bellies." Wycliffe had done a bold thing; but he was quite able to bear all the anger and all the praise it brought upon him. Yet it was a hopeless reform to start with, for until the pope and his cardinals were converted to it, the friars would never be entirely reformed or destroyed. Whatever injury they did to the people, it would be said in Rome, was more than balanced by the service they did to the church, temporally as well as spiritually. But a stern and solemn protest, like Wycliffe's, might, at least, give understanding to the people, and prepare the coming of that day, when not only friars, but popes and cardinals were to be rejected by half the world.

These "Objections," were published in 1360, and by them Wycliffe was speedily known to be a learned, brave and single-hearted man. Thirty-seven years old, and a world to change, a generation to set free from the worst of all tyrannies, tyranny over intellect and faith; this was Wycliffe's work to fulfil. In the following year, (1361,) he was presented by Baliol College to a living in Lincolnshire, and not long after, was elected to the Wardenship of the same college. Four years later, Simon Islep, the Archbishop of Canterbury, selected him to be the Warden of Canterbury Hall, a new college which the Archbishop, himself greatly distinguished as a scholar and prelate, had just founded at Oxford. There are some words in the letter of appointment addressed to Wycliffe, which deserve to be repeated: "regarding the honesty of your life and laudable conversation, and also the knowledge of letters, by which you are especially distinguished, and having all confidence in your fidelity, prudence and industry, we do entrust to you the Wardenship of our Canterbury Hall;" words, which coming from such a man as Archbishop Islep to such a man as Wycliffe, are of no little meaning. There was great trouble from a former warden, whose place had been given to Wycliffe in the new college, and when Archbishop Islep died, his successor removed Wycliffe and reinstated the old incumbent, whose single merit was in being a

brawling monk, ready to do all that the new Archbishop desired. The successive offices which Wycliffe held at Oxford are all signs of the honor, which was given him by those to whom he was best known. He, meantime, went on steadily and consistently. The course he pursued was larger every year, but its increase came from its own springs of life and energy.*

There is some importance in connecting Wycliffe's early reforms with the doings of the English parliament, because, in that way better than any other, we see how the full strength of popular opinion sustained him. The battle of Poitiers was won by the Black Prince in 1356, and France lay almost at the mercy of England. Such victories as Poitiers and Crécy, gained by archers and common men-at-arms, over feudal knights and their retainers, are signs of the people's progress in Wycliffe's times. How the energy of national feeling was impressed upon all Englishmen by these brilliant campaigns in France, may be easily comprehended. Its first expression was turned against Rome, in settling the matter of papal Provisions (appointments to church offices) by declaring, through parliament, "that the court of Rome shall not present or collate to any bishopric or living in England." (1350.) This was settling not only the matter of Provisions but the

* See a longer note at the end of this Passage.

matter of Popes, to whom Provisions were very essentially "the meat that perisheth." Pope Urban V., (1365,) vexed and alarmed, set about saving his authority in England, by demanding the payment of King John's tribute, and of all its arrears for the past thirty-three years, which, a thousand marks a year, would have been no less than two millions and a quarter of our dollars. King Edward received the pope's claims, and referred them to parliament,* who, without any hesitation, lords, knights and burghers, pledged themselves "with all their force and power to resist the same."† Wycliffe was presently made Royal Chaplain to King Edward, so that his spirit and his works had already found favor with his sovereign.

Wycliffe's most earnest friend, at this time, was the king's third and favorite son, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, a prince of such really noble mind, that his presence among the histories of his period is sure to be welcome. Chaucer, whom we cannot quote too often as a

* It is worth our while to know what parliament had done before this time, (1365.) One, so far back as 1307, had openly complained of the exactions and corruptions of Rome. Another, in 1347, ordered "that all alien Monks should avoid the realms by the day of St. Michael, and that their livings should be disposed to young English Scholars." Parliament also interfered in 1353 to prevent the transferment of any legal questions to foreign tribunals.

† The honest words of this pledge are partly given in *Le Bas's Life of Wycliffe*, Chap. iii.

chronicler, is supposed to have alluded to Lancaster in these warmly-written lines :

He was in sothe, without excepcion,
To speake of manhood, one the best on live [alive] ;
There may no man ayen [against] trouth strive,
For of his tyme and of his age also,
He provéd was there [where] men shuld have ado.

Lancaster was, long before his father's death, really at the head of affairs in England, and had still earlier been honorably associated with his brother the Black Prince in the French campaigns. Hostile by nature and by policy to the corruptions of the English clergy, he lent all his support to the pure designs of the rising reformer. We can accept the generous character by which Lancaster was constantly distinguished, as one proof, at least, that Wycliffe's purposes were neither intolerant nor gloomy. He who was most magnificent at such a court as Edward's, he who was most humane throughout such changes as marked both Edward's and Richard's reigns, he who was Chaucer's friend, would never have encouraged the spleen or the sternness of a priest, no matter how heavily these were brought to bear upon the church already beginning to fall. Lancaster is called "the pious Duke," by no less an authority than the historian Knyghton, and there is nothing to hinder us from believing that the favor shown to Wycliffe was counselled by the heart as well as the head of this royal protector. When at a later period Wycliffe seems to have

been abandoned by Lancaster, it is to be borne in mind that Lancaster was then living in retirement, unable, perhaps, to do much for any man, unwilling, perhaps, to do anything for doctrines which, he may have thought, were driven much too far for him to follow. Lancaster very likely deserved the name which one of the old chroniclers gives him, of "a faithful son to the holy Church;" but with all his fidelity to the Church, it is to him that Wycliffe was indebted for excellent support, when it was most availing.

At the time of Wycliffe's appointment to be Royal Chaplain, his name was already gone abroad through his own country and through other lands. He was presently called upon by some unknown priest, to defend the king's and the nation's refusal of the pope's demands for tribute money. He did not hesitate; it was a work for the Royal Chaplain to do; and in declaring his devout affection to the church, he claimed for the king a full and perfect right to control all ecclesiastical as well as all civil interests in his kingdom. Wycliffe also stoutly defended the Parliament for their resolution to stand by their sovereign, in a cause which was both his and theirs. Not unconsciously, we will trust, the reformer was approaching what must have been to him a glorious image, the image of a church free from priestcraft and obedient to national, universal and Christian laws. But the simple

truth of Wycliffe's positions was this, that if the king had no control over the English clergy, he would have no authority at all, while clergymen remained in possession of high places throughout the kingdom.* A parliament, in 1371, made petition to the king, "that it would please him that Laymen and *no others* might for the future be made Chancellors, Treasurers . . . or other great Officers and Governors of the Kingdom," and state-offices were accordingly "removed," says Fox, "from the Clergy to the Lords temporal." In darker years, when all the wisdom men had was shut up in monasteries, it was natural that priests should be better able than any others, to manage human concerns, temporal as much as spiritual. But when schools were opened and wisdom offered unto all, it was time that clergy should be kept a little more to their own work, and laymen suffered a little oftener to do theirs for themselves. Wycliffe and the Commons were upon this well-agreed. His own words are these: "Prelates and great religious Posses-

* "The offices of lord chancellor and lord treasurer and those of keeper and clerk of the privy seal were filled by clergymen. The master of the rolls, the master in chancery, and the chancellor and chamberlain of the exchequer, were also dignitaries or beneficed persons of the same order. One priest was treasurer for Ireland, and another for the marches of Calais; and while the parson of Oundle is employed as surveyor of the king's buildings, the parson of Harwick is called to the superintendence of the royal wardrobe." — *Vaughan's Life and Opinions of Wycliffe*, Chap. 3.

sioners are so occupied in heart about worldly lordships and with pleas of business, that no habit of devotion, of praying, of thoughtfulness on Heavenly things, on the sins of their own heart or on those of other men may be preserved ; neither may they be found studying and preaching of the Gospel, nor visiting and comforting of poor men." This is not at all exaggerated, so far as we can read ; men were priests chiefly that they might be rulers, and Wycliffe was not without reason in calling the greatest among them " Bailiffs rather than Bishops." William of Wykeham, the famous Bishop of Winchester, born in the same year with Wycliffe, is a most favorable specimen of English prelacy in his day. He founded schools, opened colleges, built up palaces and churches, and was really a worker of good things. But not content with these, he would be Chancellor of England, "so high," as Froissart says, "in the king's grace, that nothing was done in any respect whatever without his advice." It is not here worth our while to enter upon the course of the factions which he is generally supposed to have directed, almost as he pleased. The Good Parliament, as it was called, of 1376, seems to have been made up of priests, or of commoners who may be said to have been priest-ridden. Their famous remonstrance against papal usurpation amounts only to this, that they would have kept all church-revenues free from other control

than that of the English clergy, who claimed these for themselves. The impeachment of Lancaster's purposes, and the persecution of Lancaster's followers, were only brought about by a virulence of spirit, which we are here concerned to observe, because it is a sort of introduction to the attacks which Wycliffe himself was afterwards obliged to sustain. Wykeham was always foremost among those to whom reform was a hateful thing. Failing to maintain simplicity and truth in long years of eminence and trial, he opposed all Wycliffe's purposes, and finally procured Wycliffe's expulsion from Oxford in his old age. A "Bishop" and a "Bailiff" also!

In 1372, Wycliffe was appointed to the professorship of Theology at Oxford with the degree of Doctor in Divinity, and the lectures he began immediately afterwards were received by crowds of scholars, young and old. This was the public acknowledgment of his learning.

In 1373, he was named by the king as one of an embassy sent to Bruges, upon the old matter of Provisions, which, it seems, had not yet been settled to England's satisfaction. This was the public acknowledgment of Wycliffe's influence as a reformer.

These may be called his golden days, when life and hope were strong within him, notwithstanding the fifty years which he had very nearly numbered. Honor and reverence at Oxford,

honor and office in London, honor and love in that Lincolnshire parish to which he still ministered; in all these there was rejoicing for what he had done, confidence in what he had yet to do.

We must briefly follow him to Bruges, which, in the Middle Ages, was a "beautiful, powerful and grateful" city, renowned not only for its great lords, the Counts of Flanders, but for its wealthy and important citizens. Thither went Wycliffe with the Duke of Lancaster and some colleagues, to meet the pope's commissioners. At the same city were already assembled other embassies from France and from England, treating of peace under the pope's mediation; so that Wycliffe was at once brought in contact with notable men not of Bruges alone, but of France and of Rome. His own mission seems to have failed, for not yet could the pope abandon his claims to the English benefices, and Wycliffe returned home in the following year, (1375,) bringing back, at least, some new ideas, some new resolutions, by which his future course must have been directed. That he satisfied the king in the embassy, although its main object was lost, appears from his appointment by the crown to a prebend in the Worcester diocese.

Nor was this the only sign of the favor which King Edward still showed him. The rectorship of Lutterworth, falling vacant soon after, was given to Wycliffe, and a new vineyard opened

to his usefulness. In that little town, eighty miles from London, he passed the greater part of his remaining years as the "Rector of Lutterworth," the earnest preacher, the faithful friend to his people.

"A better priest, I trow, that nowher non is, [was],
He waited after ne pomp, ne reverence,
Ne maked him no special conscience,
But Cristes love, and his apostles twelve,
He taught, but first he folwed it himselve."

This is part of a Parson's portrait, drawn by Chaucer, and often supposed to be taken from the rector of Lutterworth, himself; but Wycliffe's own words are surer: "Let thy open life be a true book, in which the Soldier and the Layman may learn how to serve God and keep His commandments." Once more quoting the contemporary poet,

"To drawn folk to heven, with fairenesse,
By good ensample was his businesse,"

and the gentle life he followed at Lutterworth, is in happy contrast with the turbulence into which he necessarily plunged while pursuing his rapid reforms. One sees in Wycliffe's writings a grave and constant desire for peace he could never find throughout his last troubled years. He deserves to be remembered as one from whom "the spirit of meekness" was not estranged. In one of his works,* composed "for the sake of teaching

* Called "the Pore Caitiff," and containing a number of briefly but strongly written tracts.

simple men and women the way to Heaven," he writes with much earnestness of "mansuetude, or meekness of spirit, whereby thou mayst encounter all the roughness and peril of thy way with the semblance of ease and mildness." And as he continues, "this virtue of mildness of heart and appearance makes man gracious to God and seemly to man's sight," it is good for us to believe that he labored, not only truthfully but gently, bearing up as well as he could against all the contrary influences of his times, which made what we would call gentleness, an impossible virtue.

It was twenty years after the battle of Poitiers—most of the conquests in France were lost—the Black Prince was dead and buried at Canterbury, —John of Gaunt, "time-honored Lancaster," although bitterly opposed, was possessed of chief influence in England—when the old king Edward died. (1377.) His reign had but a gloomy close, and his grandson Richard's, which followed, began with a cloudy morning. The support which Wycliffe had long received from King Edward, could scarcely be given him by Richard, a heedless boy; and from this time the character of Wycliffe's reforms may be considered to have been changed. Hitherto contented with new projects of church-constitution, he was now bent upon new forms of church-doctrine. The evils of the world in which he lived, were in continually increasing contradiction to the blessings of the world in which

he believed. What he had already established as objects of reform, was the purification of the whole church, the deliverance of men from mendicant friars, the circumscription of the pope's authority, the return of the priesthood to their spiritual callings, and the progress of national or popular power. Beyond all these principles, and it must be remembered how great these were in the fourteenth century, beyond was something greater and clearer still, something to penetrate men's hearts as well as to influence men's lives, and Wycliffe himself began to see that faith must be made simple and pure, before action could be made simple and honorable.

IV. 1377 - 1382.

Already, a short time before King Edward's death, Wycliffe had been called to account by the English clergy and publicly charged with heresy, in their convention held at London. They seem to have been greatly alarmed by the progress his reforms were making among the people, chiefly, but also with some high personages in the kingdom. What most provoked them was not that the reformer attacked the friars or denied the pope's despotism, but that he should dare to dis-

pute with them, the priesthood, upon the propriety of holding state-offices, to which they were as much attached as to their sees or rectorships. So Wycliffe came to St. Paul's to defend his doctrines before priests and people. The good citizens of London, who knew less about the Oxford doctor than about their own bishop, were rather disposed to side against him, the more when they saw him come into the church with the Duke of Lancaster and Earl Marshal Percy, a nobleman of Lancaster's party, whose chief principle, it will be remembered, was hostility to the English priesthood. The Bishop of London, presiding over the convention, rebuked the noblemen not only for appearing there in such a cause, but for forcing a way through the crowd without much respect to the people or the priests among whom they were come. Lancaster replied haughtily, that he would do as he liked, "though the Bishop said nay," and Earl Percy bade Wycliffe be seated, "as he would have much to answer." "This," as Fox declares, "eftsoons cast the bishop into a fumish chafe," and he forbade Wycliffe to seat himself; at which Lancaster lost his temper, and muttered something about "plucking the Bishop by the hair of his head out of the church." The people began, now, to take part themselves in this troubled scene, the end of which was, that the convention separated in a tumult, and Wycliffe went away neither accused nor de-

fended. As if to make the whole matter an illustration of the strife which was between all classes, the people, enraged that their spectacle in St. Paul's was interrupted, got together out of doors and attacked Lancaster's palace, the Savoy, "to which there was none in the realm to be compared, in beauty or stateliness," doing great injury to the palace itself, and actually slaying a poor priest, supposed to be Earl Percy in disguise. The riot, after great troubles, was finally put down, and the magistrates of London were fain to "submit themselves" to Lancaster and demand his pardon.

These troubles were hardly ended when Richard Second became king of England. He was a beautiful child, and although only ten years old, he had abundant strength in the love of his people, who were proud in their memories of his father, the Black Prince, and glad in their hopes of a king so young and pure. We soon hear of Wycliffe again, as taking chief part in a question made by parliament about the great revenues which popes were drawing from the kingdom. It seems that this was submitted to Wycliffe's judgment, in the king's name, probably by the king's ministers, of whom Lancaster was far the most powerful. The reformer seized upon such an opportunity to declare the larger reforms he now had at heart. Appealing to the "principles of Christ's law," he decided for himself and for the

crown he served, that "the Kingdom might justly detain its treasure for the defence of itself, in every case where necessity shall appear to require it." This was strong, but not strong enough for him who was laboring in the name of Liberty and Religion. With solemn emphasis, he says, further, "that the Pope has no right to possess himself of the goods of the Church, as though he were Lord of them, but that he is to be with respect to them as a minister or servant, and the proctor of the Poor." Here was news to the world that believed in popedom! Pride and luxury and vice shaken, like ashes from Rome's head; this done, and Luther's name might have had no honor among men. But the time was not yet come which would give the world a greater freedom than that of speech or that of action, one that comprehends both of these, and more, far more, than is in these, the freedom of faith.

The pope himself was beginning to interfere with the course of the bold English reformer. No less than nineteen articles of "heretical doctrine" were sent out to Rome from England, and to these three papal letters were presently returned. The letters, addressed, severally, to the king, the university, and the English prelates, had the same object, to prevent the preaching of Wycliffe's reforms, even, were it necessary, by putting him in confinement or sending him to Rome. In consequence, Wycliffe was summoned before another

convention of the English clergy, which was held at Lambeth, early in the following year, (1378.) At this he appeared without any reluctance, but he was then occupying quite a different position from that he had been obliged to assume at the tumultuous convention of the year before. Lancaster had retired from the powerful position he formerly held, and Wycliffe had no present aid from his generous friend; but the reformer was warmly supported, not only by the citizens, whose attachment to his doctrines was every month increasing, but by king Richard's mother, the Princess of Wales, who even sent her usher to forbid the proceedings which were planned against Wycliffe by the bishops at Lambeth. They, the bishops, accordingly "became soft," says the historian, "as oil in their speech," and Wycliffe came out successfully from the second trial. He was now in his true place as a reformer, opposed by priests whose wrongs he was assailing; sustained by people whose rights he was maintaining with Christian manliness. At this second convention, he made a solemn "Confession of Faith," which he declared himself "ready to defend even unto death." Wycliffe is often accused of having abandoned the doctrines he began to profess, as soon as he found they were bringing trouble and danger upon him. But in Wycliffe was no fear of man, and such stories of abandonment or recantation, timidly denied even by his later biographers, we will here ut-

terly disbelieve. All that is to be found in the Lambeth confession, which can by any means be taken for a sign of surrendering principles, that were his in life and death, are these words: "In my conclusions I have followed the Sacred Scriptures and the Holy Doctors, both in their meaning and in their modes of expression; this I am willing to show; but should it be found that such conclusions are opposed to the Faith, I am prepared very willingly to retract them." It would not now be discreet or charitable, to question the truth to which this single-hearted man was faithful. Cowardly, insincere, self-interested,—had this been Wycliffe, neither his name nor his principles would have any proper place in the history of liberty. The reforms he declared, were gradual growth from one and the same stock of deep-fixed Christianity. When the wealth, the ministers, the outer forces of popedom had been shaken, it was Wycliffe's next object to set forth some new principles to take place of the old. Reform means much more than ruin; it accepts elements which are indispensable to all humanity, but gives them new beauty, new nature even, by changing the moulds in which they may hitherto have been carelessly or sinfully cast. Wycliffe's work was not only to pull down, but to build up, not only to destroy, but to renew, and how this building up, this renewal was to be accomplished, it is quite time for us to inquire.

His reforms were broached sometimes singly, sometimes in overrunning measure, but the same warmth, the same fulness was in them all, taken together or taken one by one. Mostly they may be drawn from the confession he made at Lambeth, before the Clergy of England, and such as we have found, we will here accept as the worthiest offering to Wycliffe's memory. It is to be observed, at least, that the reforms they express are reforms of theory as well as practice, of doctrine as well as discipline. The principle of renewal, that is, of real reform, lies in the heart; it must be touched by faith, or it may sleep beneath falsehood forever; it must spring up in sincerity, or it will grow to be not a fruit but a poison unto men. Deep as it was vouchsafed to Wycliffe to see into human consciences, deep as he could, he looked with anxious eye. His love for all men was steadfast, and in this he had inspiration. His comprehension of the difficulties under which all men were obliged to labor, was large-minded, and in this he had security. What came from his knowledge and his charity not only to men around him, but through them, to men after him, it is, or ought to be, our wish to comprehend. In this we must be assisted by these following doctrines.

In the *first* place, Wycliffe would set some bounds to the spiritual power of popedom. "Man can only be excommunicated by himself. . . . Popes can only loose or bind by conforming them-

selves to Christ's law. . . . A curse or an excommunication availeth only against Christ's adversaries." Such words as these, like light to night-weary souls, came swift to chase away the darkness and the heaviness of papal dominion.

In the *second* place, Wycliffe would have denied the action of spiritual upon temporal power. "Christ's disciples," he said, "have no power to exact temporal things by spiritual censures," and in saying this, he would have set kings and subjects, governments and peoples, free from the unjust authority which Rome had long exercised.

In the *third* place, it was Wycliffe's object to control the pope's temporal power, against which he had protested from the very beginning of his career. "The whole human race, since Christ, hath no power to ordain that Peter and his kind [omne genus suum] rule perpetually and politically over the world." Here arises the same image, of which we once before had a glimpse in Wycliffe's principles, a church governed not by priests, but by God's laws. Yet, whatever was concealed, there was much made clear to the fourteenth century, in this denial of church-empire.

In the *fourth* place, we discover Wycliffe's great doctrine of the Clergy's accountability to all men. "A Priest, yea, a Roman Pope, may be lawfully accused, and brought to trial by Laymen. . . . Temporal lords may, lawfully and meritoriously, deprive a delinquent Church of its property,

or a corrupt Pristhood of their temporal possessions." Here was a whole host of reforms in one, — priestcraft controlled, corruption put away, society freed, government purified, church dependent upon state, — here, in these simple phrases, were justice and purity, such as were not yet accepted among men.

These four were the great principles of Wycliffe's latest and largest reforms. The pope's power was to become spiritual and true, the pope's church was to become just and pure; and such promises fulfilled, the world would be wider and freer and holier. Deny what Wycliffe affirms, or affirm what he denies, and the difference to us, to the six centuries before us, to the countless centuries after us, is immeasurable.

On matters of less importance, his opinions may be very briefly described. The aims towards which they tended were the same in character, that is, in simplicity and holiness, but were, nevertheless, quite subordinate in strength and influence, to those which have been already unfolded. He would have done away with the Roman hierarchy, by reducing all its orders to two, priests and deacons, and freeing these from the unnatural obligation to celibacy. He would have made the worship of God a simple and an understanding sacrifice, by clearing it from image-worship, saint-worship, and all unnecessary mysteries, especially the one of transubstantiation, which

had been finally established in the church, only a hundred and fifty years before. He would have controlled and purified the clergy's influence, by abolishing confession, indulgence, pilgrimages, even tithes, — and so “watching in all things,” and “making full proof of his ministry,” Wycliffe shaped and perfected his great reforms.

“Blest be the Architect, whose art
Could build so strong in a weak heart.”

There was danger around the reformer ; some plans against him he could see and hinder ; some there were, and he knew it, that might be ended only in his martyrdom. But to these reforms of his, to the principles of which these were the expression, to one and to all, he clung as to his help here and his hope hereafter. “As all ought to be,” he said, “the Soldiers of Christ, it is evident how many are condemned by their sloth, who let the fear of the loss of temporal benefits or worldly friendships, or of the welfare of the body, make them unfaithful in the cause of God, or averse to stand manlily by it, even to death, if necessary.” He was a true man, a Protestant against the sin and the shame of Rome, a reformer and a benefactor to England, to the whole Christian world. We sit upon green turf, beneath the shade of peaceful leaves ; but we have still the heart to remember that there was neither turf nor shade, until Heaven poured its showers and its sunshine upon him who labored for man and for God.

Wycliffe's greatest work upon the Scriptures is yet to be told.

Meanwhile, a sad schism had broken into the church; the cardinals were divided; one pope was ruling in Rome, another in Avignon, (1378.) The whole world, ashamed and despairing, was still silent and afraid, when Wycliffe spoke out what other men were content to bury in their distracted hearts. "It is the Pope's sin, so long continued, that has brought on this division. . . . This man feedeth not the sheep of Christ, as Christ thrice commanded Peter; he spoileth them, and slayeth them, and leadeth them many wrong ways. . . . Emperors and Kings should help in this cause, to maintain God's Law, to recover the heritage of the Church and to destroy the sins of Clerks, always saving their persons." It was hard to see what would come from this double-headed popedom, or while it lasted, what could be believed not of one only, but of two popes infallible and immovable. A reformer, like Wycliffe, had busy thoughts to deal with at such a time, but whether he was able to comprehend, that this papal schism would force the clergy of different countries to depend more upon the king and less upon the pope, and therefore bring all men nearer to his universal church, we cannot now be very sure. The same tendency is to be discovered in the closely following struggles by which England,

like its own lion, "pawing to set free its hinder parts," was all convulsed, in the early part of Richard the Second's reign.

King Richard was himself inclined to favor Wycliffe's doctrines, not because he was an earnest or a national sovereign, for he was still a child in years; but because he had been taught to dislike the English clergy, and to wish especially to humble them. The necessities and extravagancies of his reign, charged to his councilors rather than to him, offended the people to such hatred, that the rebellion of 1381, Wat Tyler's rebellion, broke out, as if taxation and misery were so to be relieved. Froissart says, that this came from "the too great comfort of the commonalty;" Walsingham remarks that it was brought about by "the general depravity of the people:" but the people, or the commons themselves, declare that "to speak the truth, these injuries lately done to the poorer commons, more than they ever suffered before, caused them to rise and commit these mischiefs." When one reads that ten thousand guests were daily fed at Richard's royal table, it seems not only as if there were no luxury so great that it might not be found at the court of such a king, but besides, as if there were little difficulty in comprehending the causes and the objects even of an ignorant rebellion.

"Grete taxe the kynge aie toke thurgh the lande,
For whiche comons him hated free and bonde."

Hardyng's Chron.

Yet Wycliffe is dragged into chronicles as having excited the poor people of England to do themselves violent justice, and he is constantly charged if not with preaching sedition in plain words, at least with preaching what must have led to sedition through the spirit he was secretly awakening among his countrymen. The only trace of Wycliffe which is to be found in the history of Wat Tyler's insurrection is, that there was a notorious priest, named John Ball, who put himself at the head of armed peasants, and discoursed to them by day or night, upon the great things they were to gain. His text and his people's was in this old rhyme :

“ When Adam delved and Eve span,
Where was then the gentleman ? ”

But whether this priest were, or, as is far more probable, were not one of Wycliffe's disciples, it is quite unnatural to imagine that a man so reasonable, even in his greatest convictions, as Wycliffe generally kept himself, should have preached rebellion to a people he knew to be quite incapable of accomplishing any great purposes. Neither do such purposes as were driven to end in such rebellion deserve to be called great, no matter by whom proposed or by whom followed. It was not the time, in that fourteenth century, when all men could have justice done them ; and however much we may mourn the wrongs which were resisted by the peasants of France, in the

Jacquerie, or by the peasants of England, in their insurrection of 1381, the passions to which these peasants themselves yielded, are so many reasons why their insurrections failed, why they ought to have failed. Yet it would be uncharitable to deny the justice that there was in the demands of the rebels, who followed Wat Tyler. "We wish," said some, in a crowd of sixty thousand, among whom Richard the king had ventured to go, "we wish thou wouldst make us free for ever, us, our heirs and our lands, and that we should no longer be called slaves nor held in bondage."* Had they been content to make such honest claims as these, their cause would have prospered, to the joy of all true hearts like Wycliffe's. But they were bent on proving the freedom they chose, to be one of hateful outrage, and their demands of relief were so written in blood, so branded with fire, that it would be hard not to be glad with Richard when he "had regained his inheritance and the kingdom of England which he had lost." One thing more is to be remembered, that neither John Ball, nor Wat Tyler, nor their followers, left any chronicler to tell their own story. It is not our part to shut out Wycliffe from all share in the sorrows of his countrymen, or to defend him for wishing neither to see them slaves nor monsters.

* In the 2d part of Froissart, Chap. 76. See also Sir James Mackintosh's *Hist. of England*, Vol. i. p. 319.

King Richard was young and thriftless, but he neither lost his crown nor his taxes, until he had made worse enemies than appeared against him in Wycliffe's life-time. Some of his wants, the clergy alone seemed able to supply, and towards them his favor was now directed through his councillors; while they, the clergy, alarmed by schisms, rebellions and reforms, were glad to have the king on their side, even though they knew his protection must be paid from their own church-revenues. This, then, was the fresh source of injustice which Wycliffe saw opening before him; he was almost alone; king, nobles and priests were united against his heart-desires; the people were powerless and, one may even say, indifferent; but Wycliffe would have stood firm in the midst of greater changes and greater weaknesses than these. *Etiam si omnes ego non*; were all against reform, renewal, truth, he would labor for them alone. At this very time, or rather a little before, he fell ill at Oxford, and was thought to be at death's door. Some Oxford friars came to his sick-chamber, and besought him in that awful hour which seemed to have come upon him, to confess the falsehood of the doctrines he had preached against them. He listened to them as patiently as if he were too weak to answer; but when they ceased, he bade his attendants raise him in his bed, and exclaimed as earnestly as though he had been in his pulpit, "I

shall not die, but shall live and again declare the friars' evil deeds." With such resolution, he recovered and continued to speak and act from the same honest, fearless soul. One of his doctrines upon the Eucharist,—that "the Host upon the altar is neither Christ nor any part of Christ, but an efficacious sign of him,"—was presently condemned by some of the Oxford doctors who were opposed to anything like simplicity or reform. Wycliffe was lecturing from his professor's chair, surrounded by young men who admired him if they did not all feel for him, when he was interrupted by a messenger from the chancellor and the doctors, who declared their sentence upon his condemned doctrine, and, further, their prohibition of his preaching it longer, under pain of suspension from university privileges, nay, even imprisonment and excommunication. Wycliffe paused, surprised but not subdued. "I do declare," in words like these he almost instantly exclaimed, "I do declare the truth of what I have uttered and maintained; and in the matter of this sentence which ye have heard as well as I, against this do I appeal from Oxford doctors, yea, from the very Pope of Rome to the Sovereign King of England." In this he was in earnest; and although delayed, by the Duke of Lancaster's influence, from making the appeal immediately, it was made, as we shall see, at a little later period, to King and People also. We would not

forget that such a step was in his days as new and bold, as if he had undertaken to leap from old St. Paul's to one of the Windsor towers.

It would not be fair to say that Wycliffe was alone in laboring for reform. There were many, in Oxford University itself, to stand by him, in spite of threats or sentences, among whom the newly appointed chancellor himself, Robert Rigge, and several doctors, Nicholas Hereford, William Brightwell, Ralph Reppington, are especially to be named. Out of Oxford, Wycliffe had still warmer support. John of Northampton, a famous mayor of London, was a fast friend to the reformer, and did many good deeds, that we may suppose were inspired by Wycliffe's principles.* Higher friends yet to Wycliffe were the Queen, Anne of Bohemia, whom Richard had just espoused, Richard's mother, the Princess of Wales, and Richard's uncle, the Duke of Gloucester. The king, himself, if we may still concern ourselves for him, was, for the moment, leaning upon the priesthood, and therefore ill-disposed to bear with any reforms; but the favor of such a boyish and capricious king as Richard,

* He was particularly earnest in putting an end to the debaucheries and crimes which he found in London, and which he took upon himself to punish, although the clergy, in their ecclesiastical courts, claimed complete jurisdiction over all offences that were not purely civil. Walsingham, the chronicler, sets this down as London insolence, but John of Northampton was supported by all good citizens.

was worth little either to priesthood or reformer. There was, however, much hesitation among all classes, but particularly among the higher, to support doctrines which were so strange to them as those of Wycliffe's later reforms. One of his declarations, such as this, that "a Pope, Bishop or Priest, in a state of mortal sin, hath no power over the Faithful," was enough to make men fear what might come from their trusting, or even from their listening to words that swept over old faiths like the waves of a great sea. But in matters of mere practice, and even of morality, Wycliffe was better sustained than we should have thought he would have been in feudal times. The number of his followers was "very much increased," says Knyghton; "for, starting like shoots from roots of trees, they were multiplied and spread through all the land." Some among them, some knights especially, went about armed, "lest," as the same chronicler adds, "they might meet shame or loss, on account of their profane doctrine, from those who held the true Faith still." These knights and gentlemen, who embraced Wycliffe's opinions, seem to have been his strenuous and courageous friends.*

No! Wycliffe was not alone in believing the prin-

* Isti erant hujus secti promotores strenuissimi et propugnatores fortissimi: qui militari cingulo ambiebant, ne a recte credentibus aliquid opprobrii aut damni propter eorum profanam doctrinam sentiretur.—*Knyghton*.

ciples of liberty in faith and purity in soul ; nor was the world so dark as to give back no reflection of the shining light he poured upon it, not from his heart only but from the hearts of many true and faithful ones, who followed him in life, and remembered him when his life on earth was ended. His staunchest followers were the "Poor Priests," of whom we read something in all the chronicles of the time. They were "Fellows," says Fox, "going barefoot and in long frise gowns, preaching diligently unto the People;" good fellows, we should say, who asked no alms, no church-living, no repose, but were willing to go "wherever they might help their Brethren to heavenward, whether by teaching, praying or example-giving, while they have time and a little bodily strength and youth." A while ago, we took but little pains to convince ourselves that Wycliffe's reforms were not to be set down simply, as so much destruction of old things without any creation of new things. The word Reform, we thought to mean renewal rather than ruin. Now in this institution of "Poor Priests," do we find complete illustration of what we have been willing to believe. Wycliffe had declared, not only that the clergy must be purified, but also that the whole race of mendicant friars must be destroyed, if Christ were to keep possession of the world against all the struggles of Anti-christ. Yet in

those distant years, where we seem to see giant-shapes of wrong triumphant over dwarf-shapes of right, it would have been better to let things remain even as they were, than to have rejected suddenly all men who called themselves God's servants, unless their places could be filled by others of the same name but of purer hearts. This, then, was Wycliffe's purpose,—in declaring that "Friars and Priests have been the cause, beginning and maintaining of perturbation in Christiandom," —not to set the world free from counsels, or deprive the world of comforts which true priests may bring, but to save the world from evils which false priests must bring upon men. In place of a Church, to which its Clergy were a curse, and its People a shame, he would have built up a Church, whose Clergy and whose People should have been united in Christian works and Christian hopes. These Poor Priests were Wycliffe's chosen disciples and helpers. "By this, preaching the Gospel," he said, "Christ conquered the World out of the Fiend's hand;" and by preaching the Gospel, Wycliffe, himself, believed that his reforms were to be most surely achieved. The Poor Priest's mission was to live among the people in simplicity, gentleness and truth. All he had to do was to be done earnestly, but always gradually and peacefully. "Nevertheless, we condemn not Curates who do well

their office, and dwell where they shall most profit, and teach truly and stably God's Law against false Prophets and the accursed deceptions of the Fiend." Yet such gentleness as this had but poor return. "If there be any simple man," says Wycliffe also, "who desireth to live well and to teach truly God's Law, he shall be held a Hypocrite, a New Teacher, a Heretic, and not suffered to come to any benefice." These Priests, be it remembered, never sought benefices, while Wycliffe was alive; for it was his expressed desire that they should keep themselves free from temptations to corruption and indolence, such as seem to be the two peculiar characteristics of the English Clergy in his time. There was some sternness, but there was also much charity in the lives they preferred to lead. One of these Poor Priests most faithful to their master, was William Thorpe, born of respectable parents in Wycliffe's parish, and educated for the priesthood. Thoughtful and sensitive, even while a boy, he began, as he grew up, to have scruples with regard to the calling that had been chosen for him. In his anxiety, he had recourse to "those Priests,"—these are his own words,—“whom I heard to be of best name and most holy living, and best learned and most wise of heavenly wisdom; and so I communed with them unto the time that I perceived by their virtues and continual occupations, that their honest and charitable

works passed the fame which I had heard before of them." The priests, with whom he communed, were Wycliffe's disciples, and to them he joined himself, and labored steadfastly for Wycliffe's principles, more than thirty years. The account he gives of his master is brief and full enough to be repeated. "He was holden of full many men the greatest clerk that they knew then living, and withal, a passing ruly [sedate] man and innocent in his living; for which reason, great men communed often with him, and they loved so his learning, that they writ it, and busily enforced them to rule themselves thereafter." All that Wycliffe taught, all that he did, was, as William Thorpe continues, "most agreeable unto the living and teaching of Christ and His Apostles, and most openly showing and declaring how the Church of Christ had been and should yet be ruled and governed." In all the trials, examinations and persecutions, which succeeded near to Wycliffe's death, when most of the Reformer's followers were disheartened and faithless, when the truth, which Wycliffe had seemed, at least, to establish, was shaken and falling down, Thorpe was the one spirit, resolute in persecution, faithful in temptation, unchangeable in the midst of many changes. "By the authority of God's Law," he declared, "I am taught to believe that it is every Priest's office and duty to preach, busily and freely and truly, God's Word." His

name and Wycliffe's belong together ; Thorpe, the firm disciple, Wycliffe, the fearless master.*

The English Clergy were far from letting Wycliffe take his own way ; and as they had already called him before their convention, so they resolved now to hinder him by holding back his followers. William Courtney, the same bishop of London who had been active in pursuing Wycliffe, some years before, was now Archbishop of Canterbury. He was the son of the Earl of Devonshire, and certainly as haughty and violent an Archbishop,—“hot as a Tost,” so men said,—as one would care to see. A title he presently assumed,—“Chief Inquisitor of Heretical Pravity for the Province of Canterbury,”—was like a declaration of unwearied hostility to Wycliffe, and he soon proved himself to be in earnest, by holding a synod of his clergy, at the Grey Friars, in London, whose especial concern was to do something about Wycliffe's reforms. Accordingly, after confessing that these new opinions were “declared, commonly, generally, and publicly, through the realm of England,” the Clergy at Grey Friars assembled, obeyed the orders of their Archbishop, and declared all the doctrines, which Wycliffe had professed, to be heretical. It was with some

* There were other names less worthy of remembrance among Wycliffe's followers, John Aston, John Purvay, William Swinderby, “right wise men and prudent,” so long as they were true to their master.

difficulty that these brave priests were brought to determine on the matter of heresy ; for, near the very moment of decision, the house in which they were sitting was shaken by an earthquake, and they were so much alarmed, that Archbishop Courtney was obliged to convince them, that the earthquake was a sign of evil doctrines downfallen, before they were calm enough to do all he desired. Then followed a procession to St. Paul's, where a sermon was preached by a friar, upon the heresies of the time ; and Archbishop Courtney sent abroad letters "admonishing and warning that no man do henceforth hold, preach or defend the foresaid heresies and errors;" all which seems to us as efficacious, as if the Archbishop and his priests had warned men to use their eyes and ears no longer. Wycliffe himself had soon something to say about "the Earthquake Council of Friars." To one of the synod-sessions held afterwards, Chancellor Rigge and Doctor Brightwell were summoned from Oxford, charged with having favored the reformer's doctrines. Doctor Reppington, it seemed, had just been preaching a sermon, before the members of the university and the citizens, in which he declared his purpose of defending Wycliffe, as "a true Catholic Doctor," against the empty sentence blown out, like a bubble, from the synod at the Grey Friars. They who heard Reppington preach this sermon scarcely allowed him to finish

it; and when it was done, some friends, "privily weaponed under their garments," dragged him away, and saved him from the numerous enemies who were now violent against Wycliffe and Wycliffe's followers. Doctor Nicholas Hereford had preached another sermon to the same purpose of defending the reformer against his enemies, and both he and Reppington had been sustained by the Chancellor and Doctor Brightwell. They were therefore all called before the synod at the Grey Friars. Here came the beginning of that faithlessness, after which Wycliffe was abandoned in his old age, by many who had hitherto been true to him. Rigge and Brightwell submitted first: the Chancellor, at Archbishop Courtney's command, declared Wycliffe, Reppington and the others to be suspended from "all scholastic exercises, until such times as they should have purified themselves;" and even Reppington, himself, yielded, to come out afterwards as Bishop of Lincoln and persecutor of Wycliffe's people. Hereford is constantly represented as the most eminent among all the Oxford scholars who attached themselves to Wycliffe, and is, besides, generally supposed to have labored in the great work of the Bible-Translation. It has been said about him that he kept his faith, and died in a Convent of Friars with whom he found a later refuge. But to this there are contrary reports, so strongly sustained by church-records, of recan-

tation first and recompense afterwards, that it is impossible to speak more warmly of Hereford's memory.

In 1382, there was published a statute, in the king's name, "against the foresaid heresies and errors," which the clergy were declaring and prohibiting with much bitterness and even with much success.* It was the first sign of positive discountenance which Wycliffe received from the king, he faithfully obeyed; but even as Edward's reign had been noble and national, at least in all its better days, so was Richard's profligate and timeserving from its beginning to its miserable end. Wycliffe's trust in monarchy, in that one principle of justice, was surely shaken before he died. He addressed, at this time, to Parliament, what he called a "Complaint," setting forth the claims of his reforms to the confidence and support of his countrymen.† The Commons, more at-

* The statute ordered all the king's magistrates to arrest "such evil persons, as go from county to county and from town to town, in certain habits, under dissimulation of great holiness, and without the license of the ordinaries of the places or other sufficient authority, preaching daily, not only in churches and church-yards, but also in markets, fairs and other open places where a great congregation of people is, divers sermons containing heresies and notorious errors, &c. to the great peril of the souls of the people and of all the realm of England, &c. and to hold," so the command continues, "to hold all such preachers in arrest, these and their fautors and abettors, till they will justify themselves according to the law and reason of holy church."

† There is a plain account of this Complaint in the 7th Chapter of Le Bas's biography.

tached to Wycliffe than to any Archbishops or Inquisitors, made immediate petition to the king that the statute he had published "be disannulled," as "it was in no wise their meaning that either themselves or such as shall succeed them, be farther bound to the Prelates than were their ancestors in former times." After this honest demand of freedom, the statute was repealed; but Archbishop Courtney was not discouraged, and straightway summoned Wycliffe to a Court of Clergy, before whom the reformer was called upon to make full and humble submission. Far from submission or retractation, Wycliffe defended his reforms, with a spirit that won the admiration of those who most feared him, and all the confession he offered to make was one which is acknowledged even by his enemy, Chronicler Walsingham, to have been a confession of faith unchanged and unchangeable. There was no fear, no denial, no shame, let chroniclers say what they will, in Wycliffe's conduct or in Wycliffe's soul. This very year, (1382,) was published a book called *Triologus*, in which all the importance of his doctrines was upheld with as much earnestness as ever. One triumph, however, was certainly gained over him, in his separation from Oxford by the king's command. Poor king! not poor Wycliffe! His voice might be stopped, but his pen was left to him; and, had that also been taken away, there was a spirit dwelling with him and remaining

after him, which no clergy, no king could control. "Let a man," said he himself, "let a man stand on Virtue and Truth, and all the world overcometh him not." We should think that the peace of Lutterworth would have been welcome after Oxford sentences and London synods. There, in the place of his gentlest offices, with the help of sturdy arms and honest hearts, was the repose which he deserved in his old age. It was time for him to

"Take the fruit and let the chaf be stille."

One more summons came to Wycliffe, neither from Oxford doctors nor from London bishops, but from Urban, pope of Rome. That the pope would have been glad to have the reformer in his power, and that the reformer should have been entirely unwilling to trust the pope at all, are matters of course; but there is something in Wycliffe's written reply which we must here remark. After "joyfully telling all true men the belief that he holds and allegiance to the Pope,"—a belief and an allegiance which Urban would scarcely care to claim,—he proceeds in this wise: "I suppose that the Pope be most obliged to the keeping of the Gospel among all men that live. . . . This I take as wholesome counsel, that the Pope leave his worldly Lordships to worldly Lords, as Christ bid him, and move speedily all his Clerks to do so: for thus did Christ and taught

thus his Disciples, till the Fiend had blinded this World. And if I err in this sentence I will meekly be amended, by the Death, if it be needful, for that, I hope, were good to me. Christ hath taught me more obedience to God than to man." With these words upon his lips, risen there from out a full heart, Wycliffe went quietly to Lutterworth, to spend a few more months of life in what he loved to do, "teaching, praying and example-giving." We have yet to follow him in some of his busiest hours and most earnest desires.

V.

The name which Wycliffe bore among the great scholars around him, the name of "Gospel Doctor," is his chief claim to our reverence and our gratitude. In an age of scholasticism and corruption, he studied and loved the Scriptures from the time he knew how to study and to love at all. They were to his youth, at Oxford, like springs, from which he drew deep draughts to last him long through his life-time. The Bible, to him, was a fountain of purity, by which they who believed in him were cleansed from the impiety and despotism of the Church of Rome. He would so

shape his whole course upon earth after God's guidance, that God's word should be like "the washing of water" to his weary feet and his thirsty soul. Man cannot labor alone; and Socrates bewailed, even in the night of heathenism, that, "unless the Deity give us instruction, there is no hope of changing our lives." To a Diviner instruction than Socrates was able even to imagine, Wycliffe turned with an earnest and a trustful spirit. "In all things," he said, "it appears to me that the believing man should use this rule, — if he soundly understand the Sacred Scriptures, let him bless God, — if he be deficient in such a perception, let him labor for soundness of mind." This may be nothing new to us, but it was something new to England in 1383, when Wycliffe completed his greatest work, the Translation of the Bible, the first translation of the Bible into the English language.

This Translation is Wycliffe's declaration of faith in God and love for man. The moment we understand clearly how God's glory and man's perfection were both carried forward by such a work as this Bible-Translation, we shall also comprehend the measure of Wycliffe's goodness. His greatness is already established in all English histories, which record, some wisely, some unwisely, the reforms he created and continued. But of Wycliffe's goodness scarcely any one has spoken or written, as goodness, far more than

greatness, deserves in all men to be remembered. If in these rude words there could be anything to

“make this memory flower
With odors sweet though late,”

it should be their heartiness in describing the work of Wycliffe's age, the work in which all his affections, all his virtues, all his prayers seemed to be united. It is little to say that the Translation was well done, that as a mere contribution to literature it brought new strength and larger excellence into the English language. It is more to say that it was wonderfully strange; but it would be still better for us silently to conceive the spirit in one man with which such a work could alone be accomplished, and afterwards look abroad for the influence it had upon all other men. The chronicler Knyghton has something here to say. “This master Wycliffe translated the Bible out of Latin into English, and thus laid it more open to the Laity and to women who could read, than it had formerly been to the most learned of the Clergy;” and this, written in bitterness and derision, is now to be set down in Wycliffe's praise. The English Clergy were all alarmed and angered. They declared the Translation “forbidden fruit,” and pronounced it to be “heresy to speak of the Scriptures in English;” but the pure-hearted man, whom they so bitterly hated, acknowledged no other heresy than heresy against truth, and knew that the fruit he offered

unto his countrymen was from the tree of life eternal. The Scriptures were to Wycliffe a greater lever than Archimedes desired, to move the earth.*

“The best life, then, for Priests in this world,” said Wycliffe, himself, “is to teach and spread the Gospel.” The moral blessings it brought, were in progress from vast, wavering reason to pure, steadfast conscience, from changeful, hostile dogmas to one peaceful and immutable truth. The political influences,—we may speak of such, surely, as are political, without forgetting that there are others far higher and purer,—the political influences of such a work as Wycliffe’s Translation, were manifold as seeds sown for a bountiful harvest. The Scriptures loosen chains from body as from soul; they raise man’s condition as they raise man’s character; they make this world wider and freer, by joining it to the world hereafter. Where the Bible is, there are freedom and progress and knowledge of Immortality. It is enough to remember the words of our Saviour,—“the Poor have the Gospel preached to them,”—to know what Wycliffe did for his countrymen and for all mankind, in setting up that “light of the world,” which priests had “put under a bushel” of their own. “It is now a great sin,” exclaims Wycliffe, “not to arise

* See a second note at the close.

and to throw open our windows, for this spiritual Light is ready to shine unto all men who will open to receive it. . . . Therefore let every man," he adds, "wisely, with meek prayer and great study, and also with charity, read the Words of God." Such an appeal was not in vain; the words he restored were read everywhere, as he desired, and did more for his cause, for all men's cause, than any other preaching or reforming could have done; so that, as the historian confesses, "every second man in the country was Wycliffe's follower." Not only was the Bible translated and spread abroad, but to inform the understandings of people scarcely able to read it by themselves, Wycliffe published a tract upon the "Truth and Meaning of Scripture." In this, among many things it would do us good to read, are some words to be repeated: "The truth of the Faith shines the more clearly, by how much the more it is known; the Scripture is the Faith of the Church, and the more it is known in an orthodox sense, the better; therefore, as secular men ought to know the Faith, so it is to be taught men in whatsoever language is best known to them." One of the last efforts of Wycliffe's generous life was a defence he made of his Translation, before Parliament, setting forth that the Scriptures were "the People's property," and that what he had restored to his countrymen, had long before been given by Christ unto all mankind.

Again, and finally, if we remind ourselves of the ignorance which was between men and their wants, both temporal and spiritual, of the knowledge and the peace with which the Bible alone was able to "cover the earth," we shall more surely conceive what this Translation, of 1383, must have done. One hundred and fifty years, too, before Luther's time! One hundred and fifty shades deeper of darkness upon the world than were above Luther's eyes! It is but common gratitude to confess the name which was long ago given to Wycliffe as "the Morning-star of the Reformation;" it is but common devotion to thank God that the fourteenth century was not too dim, too vaporsome, for that morning light to break in and shine upon.

VI.

The great hopes for which Wycliffe, like any true reformer, toiled, were Faith and Liberty, kindred in progress, in power, and in truth. His reforms were chiefly connected with the Church, but according to his conception of the word, rather the body Church, they would have large influence in all places and with all men. He could not make Church-Freedom holy without

making State-Freedom dear; he could not establish Faith in Church without establishing what it is not here irreverent to call Faith in State. Liberty strengthened and Faith purified, for these he lived, and these, bound together on earth, were together the golden chain by which earth was to be bound to Heaven.

“—— Claims from other worlds inspirited
 The Star of Liberty to rise. Nor yet
 (Grave this within thy heart!) if spiritual things
 Be lost, through apathy, or scorn, or fear,
 Shalt thou thy humbler franchises support,
 However hardly won or justly dear:
 What came from Heaven to Heaven by nature clings.”

✓ We remember that Wycliffe has never yet disturbed Civil Authority in England. His respect towards Lords has been quite as remarkable as his rebuke of Clerks and Priests and Friars. One reason for this submission was that he needed aid in working out his great Church reforms. Without such friends as the Queen or Lancaster, he might have met the martyrdom of which he often spoke as very near to him. Edward was his king and friend, and gave to him not only the Lutterworth Rectory, but the place of Royal Chaplain. Yet we are not to believe that Wycliffe was silent about State-reforms merely because he owed anything to King, Queen, or Lords of England. ✓ He was neither a violent nor an extreme reformer, but considerate as well as earnest, in all he did and all he refrained from

doing. His earnestness is so plain, that his considerateness has been constantly doubted. But if any works or any words of Wycliffe seem contradictory to the prudence and the calmness which we would like to acknowledge in him, there must be made a greater allowance for the temper of his age than for the temper of his own mind. His life is a beautiful example of the wisdom that there is in keeping from new evils while escaping from old ones. Had his days been prolonged beyond any mortal period, he might have fulfilled all the purposes of his heart ; but, short-lived and weak-armed as he was, he could only make a beginning, to which, even in our time, the end is not yet come. Most of the great evils about him had their root in the Church of Rome. He believed that, if the church were purified and expanded, the whole world would be brightened and increased ; but, to fulfil such a belief, he had need of man's assistance through God's blessing. Heaven was open to his soul, and it was by heavenly knowledge and heavenly gentleness that the confidence of his fellow-men was most surely to be acquired. He accepted whatever was good and strong in the principles of King or Lords, as aid to him against the evil and the decay which were in the principles of Pope and Priests. It would not at any time be reasonable or humane to set up an individual opposition against all common theories and all common practices ; but, in such

times as Wycliffe's, indiscriminate hostility to all men and all things would have been a howl of defiance rather than a pledge of reform. How large Wycliffe's aims really were, is at once comprehended after reading these words from himself or from one of his nearest followers: "When men speak of Holy Church, they understand anon Prelates and Priests, Canons and Friars and all men that have [shaven] crowns, though they live never so cursedly against God's Law; and they call not nor hold secular men to be of Holy Church, though they live never so truly after God's Law and end in perfect charity,—and here lieth the error of the world." Such a desire that all men should be brought into a Christian life, was too pure, too peaceful, to be joined with any other labor than labor against the wrong from which men were suffering. Some around Wycliffe knew, some did not know, the sources of their suffering and the ends of his labor; but his whole life was the expression of many other lives, silent to us, yet not unanswering to him. Wycliffe, even the reformer, was never "one of the Antipodes to tread opposite to the present world."

The Council of Constance condemned what would still be called a seditious doctrine of "Dominion founded on Grace,"—according to which the authority of king, noble, or magistrate would be utterly forfeited by any personal or public evil-doing,—and this was condemned as having been

maintained by Wycliffe against all acknowledged order, all acknowledged law. But it was very far from his purposes to have assailed the powers upon which he and his national principles depended. No principle, no power, no purpose could make him time-serving or insincere. When he began, as he must have begun, to despair of success, even in Church reform, he turned more earnestly to meet the wants of truth and justice which he could distinguish everywhere around him. Two years before he died, he published a tract upon the "Duty of Lords," in which he enters into interests of State as well as of Church, expressing his conviction concerning the union between these interests, both alike human, in a demand upon "Lords and Magistrates," that "they may constrain Clerks to live in meekness, wilful poverty, discreet penance, and ghostly travail." It is in the same tract that he declares the good things which will be gained, universally, by doing away with the evil things which the Church allowed. "Lords," he says also, "should know God's Law, and study to maintain it," which was much to be said at that lawless period; but in another of Wycliffe's tracts there is said, even more strongly, "if temporal Lords do wrongs and extortions to the people, they are traitors to God and His people." The spirit of all these words is this, that the Christian Magistrate should be a Magistrate in the Church and a Magistrate

over the People ; or, according to his own translation of the Psalms, “Ye Kynges, understonde : ye that demen [judge] the erthe, be lernid : serve ye to the Lord with dreed : and make ye, fuul oute, joie to Him with tremblynge.”

The frequency with which English parliaments were summoned through the greater part of Wycliffe's life-time, and the repeated harmony between his opinions and their petitions, deserve to be remembered. The only expression, which parliaments were then able to give to popular opinion, would not now seem much to us, but it was something to Wycliffe, a support and an encouragement to him. Throughout the last half of Edward's reign, Wycliffe is very prominent in common civil history, and it was not until later in Richard's vexatious reign, that Wycliffe's principles and Edward's, also, were abandoned. Any one of Wycliffe's reforms, secular or ecclesiastical, will be found to express in all its fulness the spirit of nationality, that is, of freedom and progress, which was just aroused in England.


✓ Among Wycliffe's most earnest opinions, Christian and political, both in one, was his strong-hearted condemnation of war. ✓ If men are to be judged after their own times and not after ours, we must remember that Wycliffe lived in a feudal age. It is plain enough for us to lament the wars which have sprung up, like monsters born of blood and fire, in later years ; but it was not so plain

for Wycliffe to speak words of peace in times which were full of strife and wrong. Chivalry, which declared it "lawful to annoy an enemy just as one can," had made blood-shed honorable to men's eyes; Edward's victories in France had set England in a blaze which heaven's showers could only extinguish from men's hearts. Therefore it was brave, nay, more, therefore it was Christian for Wycliffe to declare, that to all this glory, "the charity of Christ biddeth the contrary." "Angels withstood fiends," he exclaimed again, "and many men with right of Law withstand their Enemies, and yet they kill them not, neither fight with them." With bitterness of spirit, than which no philanthropist of our times seems to have felt greater, he asks, "What honor falls to a knight that he kills many men? the hangman killeth many more, and with a better title; better were it for men to be butchers of swine than slayers of their brethren." That question has never had an answer, and we can reflect now that it was asked long before preachers of peace began to speak to men of the shame of unchristian wars.

There were two popes, it will be remembered, at this time, one in Rome and another in Avignon. Urban, pope of Rome, stirred by wrath, resolved to make one desperate effort against Clement, pope of Avignon. To this end, he sought the aid of England, selecting that nation as his champion

against France which adhered to his adversary. More than thirty bulls, to king, lords, prelates, priests and people, were sent from Rome, not only absolving "from all crime or fault, every one who would assist in the destruction of the Clementists," but likewise ordering, "as men-at-arms cannot live on pardons," that the English Church should raise from its own revenues some moneys to defray the necessities of this "holy" enterprise,* which was preached throughout England "in the manner of a Crusade." The people, willing to believe what they were told, that "none of either sex should end the year happily nor have any chance of entering paradise, if they did not give handsomely to the expedition as pure alms," contributed their money and their service. A bishop of Norwich, "young and eager and wishing to bear arms," was made commander, as the pope's representative, and, followed by knights, soldiers and "multitudes of priests," he went over to France and Flanders in the spring of 1383. It was not long after, that commander and soldiers all returned together, without any other glory than that of having done something, as they would never have wished to do, towards weakening the power

* It is impossible not to repeat a question Wycliffe put to all Christendom. "Why will not the proud Priest of Rome grant full pardon to all men for to live in peace and charity and patience, as he doth to all men to fight and slay Christian men?"



which their pope was losing fast. Wycliffe had already cried, in loud voice and threatening spirit, "Why is not he a fiend, stained foul with homicide, who, though a Priest, fights in such a cause? . . . Christ taught not his Apostles to fight with a sword of iron, but with the sword of God's Word, which standeth in meekness of heart and in the prudence of man's tongue." He was himself a meek and a prudent man, but it was not for him to fear venturing out in such storms as were blowing over the world. Once more he exclaims, and the words sound like his last: "The Captain of our Battle is Christ, and what good knight should dread him to fight in the Armies of the Lord?"

VII.

Wycliffe's fight "in the armies of the Lord" was over, and a stainless victory was gained through him for all mankind. The last months of his life were spent at Lutterworth. Forbidden to preach at Oxford, and rejected by King and Priests of England, there was no other place than his peaceful Rectory, which seemed to need or to acknowledge him. He knew, in peace or strife, that he had been true to his work on earth, true

to his hope in Heaven, and that what he had done was not done in vain. "Truly aware I am," he said, "truly aware I am that the Doctrine of the Gospel may, for a season, be trampled under foot, that it may be overpowered in high places and even suppressed by the threatenings of Anti-Christ; but equally sure I am that it shall never be extinguished, for it is the recording of Truth itself. 'Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but so shall not my words.' "

Wycliffe was struck with paralysis in church as he was saying mass, and died, two days after, on the 31st December, 1384. He was sixty years old. "Admirable," says old Fuller, "that a hare so often hunted, with so many packs of dogs, should die, at last, quietly sitting in his form." More admirable, we should say, that the laborer should not be taken from the vineyard until he had filled it full with vines of promise, both temporal and eternal.

Wycliffe passed away, but the labor of his life has endured. In the midst of persecutions and recantations, his reforms remained to enrich all present and increase all future times. The voice of one among his disciples, Lord Cobham, still gives its testimony: "As for that virtuous man, Wycliffe, I shall say here, of my part, both before God and man, that before I knew that despised Doctrine of his, I never abstained from sin. But

since I learned therein to fear my Lord God, it hath otherwise, I trust, been with me." Through Wycliffe, we will trust it hath been otherwise with us all.

The oath which some of Wycliffe's followers were obliged to take before a persecuting Archbishop of York, is a fit commentary upon all the doctrines he maintained, and all the doctrines to which he was opposed. "I, before you, worshipful father and Lord Archbishop of York and your Clergy, with my free will and full advised, swear to God and to all His saints, upon this Holy Gospel, that, from this day forthward, I shall worship images with praying and offering unto them in the worship of the Saints that they be made after,—and also, I shall never more despise Pilgrimages nor states of Holy Church in no degree,—and also, I shall be buxom to the Laws of Holy Church and to yours, to mine Archbishop and mine other Ordinaries and Curates, and keep the Laws upon my power and maintain them—and also, I shall never more maintain nor teach nor defend errors, conclusions, nor teachings of the Lollards." * We do not need much more than this to make us grateful to our old English reformer.

* A sorry name given to Wycliffe's followers. See a third note at the close.

Four and forty years after Wycliffe was buried at Lutterworth, there came to his grave some "Officials" charged by a poor Bishop of Lincoln, whose name need not be repeated, with executing an order of the Constance Council, issued in 1415, thirteen years before. Such was the spleen of this Council, says Fuller, the ancient Church historian, "such was their spleen, as they not only cursed his memory as dying an obstinate heretic, but ordered that his bones be taken out of the grounds and thrown far off from any Christian burial . . . To Lutterworth they come," continues the historian with pathetic quaintness, "to Lutterworth they come, Sumner, Commissary, Official, Chancellor, Proctors, Doctors and the servants, (so that the remnant of the body would not hold out a bone amongst so many hands,) take what was left out of the grave and burnt them to ashes and cast them into Swift, a neighboring brook running hard by. Thus this brook has conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow Seas, they into the main Ocean; and thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his Doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over." It is only needful to add, that, from Wycliffe to John Huss the German, from Huss to Girolamo Savonarola the Italian, and from Savonarola to Martin Luther the World-Reformer, there are but the changes of men mor-

tally perishing, but bearing on the great principles of Faith and Liberty, which are imperishable.

“ Lord with what care hast thou begirt us round !

* * * * *

Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,

Blessings beforehand, ties of gratefulness,

The sound of glory ringing in our ears ;

Without, our shame, within, our consciences ;

Angels and Grace, eternal hopes and fears.”

NOTES.

Note to page 71.

It may be as well to tell the whole story about Canterbury Hall, because Wycliffe's enemies constantly brought it to bear against him. The college was founded for eleven scholars, of whom three, with the warden, were to be taken from Christ Church monastery, at Canterbury, while the other eight were to be clerks or simple scholars. The first warden was a monk named Woodhall, who turned out to be so violent in office, that the college was in constant tumult. So the founder himself, Archbishop Islep, removed him and all the three monks, giving their places to clerks, and inviting Wycliffe to become warden. But Archbishop Islep soon died, and was succeeded by Peter Langham (then Bishop of Ely,) who had been a monk himself, and whose sympathies were all in favor of the monks lately ejected from Canterbury Hall. Woodhall and his three brethren were restored to their posts, and to make way for them, Wycliffe and his three clerks were ejected. These last appealed to the pope, but the matter ended in their removal being confirmed, not only by the pope, (1370,) but, what seems very strange, by the king. Wycliffe submitted in peace, but all his hostile chroniclers declare that this sentence drove him to rebel against the authority of Rome. Believe no such unworthy charge. Long before the pope confirmed Archbishop Langham's proceedings with regard to the college, (1370,) Wycliffe had not only published his "Last Age of the Church" (1356) and his "Objections to Friars" (1360,) but even while he still held the wardenship, (1366,) he had defended the refusal of parliament to acknowledge the pope's claims to tribute. It is a main object with us to acknowledge Wycliffe's sincerity.

Note to page 112.

Without wishing to crowd so small a volume as this with unnecessary details, it is most earnestly my desire to make Wycliffe's labor for the Scriptures plainer than most of those writing about him have chosen to do. It was his great labor, his labor of true love, and does entirely deserve to be comprehended. With this purpose, I have gathered into a brief note some extracts from his own writings, bearing against the spirit which all his writings were intended to overcome. The amusements of the Clergy and the occupations of Scholars in his time have been already described. But it has not yet perhaps been made clear that the point farthest removed from both scholastic and clerical pursuits was the study of the Scriptures. The one Volume, dearest to our hearts, was nearly closed to human hopes, and human fears, when Wycliffe came into the world. The only places, in which the Bible was ever opened, were in universities or monasteries, and even there it was often rejected, because, we will hope, it was a book unknown. "He," says Roger Bacon, "who lectures upon the Scriptures must give place to him who lectures upon the Sentences,* for this one will everywhere have honor and precedence." The names of great divines and scholars, in the Dark Ages,—Sublime, Incontrovertible, Seraphic, Angelic,—are signs of so much scholasticism, that is, of so much pursuit after things merely intellectual. There was no common union between learning and humanity, none between knowledge and charity; the educated were not even generally good, nor were the good even generally educated. One evil doubt which really prevailed about the possibility of villeins or serfs being received in Heaven, is simpler than any long account could be, in making us feel how often good hearts and wise heads must have been unnaturally separated. The Scriptures were either neglected, because they were unknown, or else forbidden, because the precepts they declared, were far from the practices in which men, and even priests, were willing to abide. "This," writes Wycliffe, "do our High Priests mark well; lest the Truth of God's Law, hid in the Sepulchre, break out to the knowing of the Common People. O Christ! Thy Law is thus hidden now; when wilt Thou send Thine Angel to remove the Stone and show Thy Truth unto Thy Flock?"

In the very earliest tract which Wycliffe published among the

* Peter Lombard's 'book of Sentences,'—a fanciful collection of dogmatic propositions drawn from various Church-Fathers.

people, in the "Last Age of the Church," he sets forth the example after which his whole life was then determined: "Jesus Christ, entering into holy things, that is, into holy Church, by holy Living and holy Teaching." Another work upon the Commandments [*Expositio Decalogi*] illustrates Wycliffe's teaching of the Scriptures, at that time, when, as he writes himself, it was nothing uncommon for men to "call God 'Master,' two, three, or fourscore years, and yet to remain ignorant of His Commandments." After other words of introduction, Wycliffe begins to comment upon the Commandments in the Old Testament. The purpose of the whole tract is simple explanation of such among the Commandments as were not clear to his countrymen; and the manner in which he was wont to do this may be taken from another tract containing the following exposition of the first among the Ten. "What thing a man loveth most, that thing he maketh his god. . . . And thus when man or woman forsaketh Meekness, the Meekness which Christ Jesus commandeth, and giveth himself to Highness and Pride, he maketh the Fiend his god, . . . or using deadly sin, he breaketh this first Commandment, worshipping false gods." "Let every man," he writes in the *Expositio Decalogi*, "let every man and woman who desires to come to the Life that lasts forever, do his business, with all strength of Body and Soul, to keep God's Commandments." In his tract upon the Papal Schism, already mentioned, are these words, connected with his Scriptural labors; "they, the priests, must learn their Logic and their Philosophy well, lest they prove heretical by a false understanding of the Law of Christ . . . and this Freedom," he said in one of his sermons, "this Freedom Christ gave to men that they might come to Heaven's bliss with least difficulty; . . . and we," he continues in still another place, "we cannot so much as think a good Thought, unless Jesus, the Angel of great Counsel, send it; nor perform a good Work, unless it be properly His good Work."

But even this note would be made too long, were it filled fuller with extracts significative of Wycliffe's confidence in the Scriptures. The clearest proof of this confidence is in just such words as have been quoted, so openly do they show the knowledge he possessed and the ends to which that knowledge was turned. He could neither have spoken of God's Law, nor of Christ's Life, nor of man's duty, as he does here, had he not given up mind and heart to purer studies and higher thoughts than were followed by most men around him. One more extract from his writings is added, because

it so sets forth the life, which Wycliffe early chose, and to which he was continually faithful. "Good Priests, who live well in purity of Thought and Speech and Deed, and in good Example to the People, who teach the Law of God, up to their knowledge, and labor fast, day and night, to learn it better and teach it openly and constantly, these are the very Prophets of God . . . and the Spiritual Lights of the world. . . . Think, then, ye Priests on this noble office, and honor it, and do it cheerfully according to your Knowledge and your Power." As Wycliffe declared at Lambeth, before the English clergy, and in Parliament, before the English people: "These are the conclusions, which I will defend unto the death."

As a specimen of Wycliffe's Translation, I have taken from Barber's edition, (printed in 1810,) the verses of St. Matthew's Gospel, which contain the Beatitudes.

"Blessid be pore men in spirit ; for the kyngdom of hevenes is herun. Blessid ben thei that mournen ; for thei schalen be coumforted. Blessid ben mylder men ; for thei schalen weelde the erthe. Blessid ben thei that hungren and thirsten rightwisnesse ; for thei schal be fulfilled. Blessid ben merciful men ; for thei schal gete mercy. Blessid ben thei that ben of clene herte ; for thei schalen se God. Blessid ben pesible men ; for thei schalen be clepid Goddis children. Blessid ben thei that suffren persecucioun for rightwisnesse ; for the kyngdom of hevenes is herun. Ye schal be blessid whenne men schal curse you, and schal pursue you, and schal seye al yvel agens you liynge for me. Joie ye and be ye glade ; for your meede is plenteous in hevenes."

Note to page 124.

I have not thought any account of the later Lollards or of their persecutions needed ; because it has always seemed to me that they do not deserve to be considered as Wycliffe's followers. While the reformer was alive, his Poor Priests and his people lived together among other men in the peace which he constantly preached to them. But when he died, when, three years after, his writings were forbidden by royal statute, and, still more, when a new king, Henry the Fourth, consented that "heretics" should be burned alive, it appears as if the purposes of the Lollards, become violent and fanatical, had been changed by circumstances changing about them. It was enough to fulfil the promises which Wycliffe had given, that his faith and his energy were preserved in some honest and unalterable hearts.

THE REFORMS OF SAVONAROLA.



1489-1498.

[Πύλις] ἐν λόγοις 'κειμένη, ἐπεὶ γῆς γε οὐδαμοῦ οἶμαι αὐτὴν εἶναι.

A State which exists only in design, for I do not believe its like to be upon the Earth.

Plato. [Republic, Book IX.]

The perfect State and the perfect Church are identical.

Arnold. [Inaugural Lecture.]

THE REFORMS OF SAVONAROLA.

I.

FAR away — and long ago — were the scenes we would seek in that still blooming Florence, which Charles the Emperor declared “too pleasant to be looked on, but only on holidays.” One bright afternoon of a spring, three hundred and fifty years gone by, on the Palm-Sunday of 1496, a long procession that we would follow ourselves, is moving through the city. By the banks of swift-flowing Arno, on broad, sunshiny squares, in narrow streets overshadowed by lofty palaces, everywhere beneath that southern sky, we shall find, spread out in crowds, a light-hearted and impulsive people. There are nobles of ancient name, merchants of recent wealth, artisans of lusty bearing, and women of stately steps and brilliant eyes. The festival seems to be one, in which all are sharing equally, and they tell us

that it is to represent the entry of Christ into Jerusalem. Church-bells ring in boisterous harmony, while sounds of psalm-singing are mingled with the murmurs of a rejoicing multitude. Eight thousand children, wearing red crosses and holding olive branches, come grouped around a tabernacle covered with sacred images. Priests and monks, citizens and even armed soldiers follow on, all chanting fervently some holy airs. Girls, in white robes wreathed with flowers, a train of pure and budding creatures themselves, walk after, and behind these are their sisters and mothers in so great numbers, that the long lines are closed and filled with women. Such as stand by catch the enthusiasm they behold, and a vehement friar cries aloud that the glory of Paradise is descended upon the earth. Here and there the procession lingers to join in chant and solemn dance about the tabernacle which the children bear; and when it reaches the cathedral, each one pauses in succession to bend his knee before the altar and recite his prayers. There must have been some wonderful influence to move not the surface only, but the very depths of devotion in these careless Florentines. Even they, who look on coldly, seem to respect feelings most contrary to their own. The insolence of nobles and the turbulence of citizens are banished, at least on this unwonted holiday. We follow the throng in peace from the cathedral to St. Mark's square,

where stands the convent of the same name. There the people pause and give passionate greeting to a monk just coming from the convent-door. It is easy to see that this is no ordinary man. His countenance is thin and worn away, but above it rises an abundant brow, and from full, glowing eyes shines forth the light of a great soul. Men, women, and children are hushed to hear him speak of truth and love, in words that kindle and subdue, by turns, their listening hearts. In him the people of Florence acknowledge their great man, their reformer, their teacher, Savonarola. The ceremonies so briefly described, were done at his orders and with his directions. Now, that he ceases to speak, the crowd opens and gathers again round a circle of monks, children, women and citizens, all dancing and singing, ring within ring, as one of the friars may well say, "without any other heed at all," until the day closes and the people, weary and restless still, return to their quiet homes. The good-will and the enthusiasm of this Palm-Sunday are to be borne in mind as both characteristic of Savonarola's influence over the Florentines. Some one says that the city is become "a New Jerusalem in so much mystery," and that it is so we are quite ready to believe.

Four years earlier, at the death of Lorenzo de Medici, Florence would have seemed to us a new Babylon rather than a new Jerusalem. Then there was no other enthusiasm than such as men

find in riot and revelry, no other peace than such as comes with submission and forgetfulness. Lorenzo's half gentle, half rugged face tells us more of him than any historian has fully told. In that compressed lip, that searching eye and that swollen brow are expressed his unprincipled ambition and his fervid intellect. He was a magnificent scholar, and for that we honor him; he was a corrupt ruler, and for that he will be scorned by honest men. Florence, while Lorenzo lived, was harnessed to his chariot wheels, and far was she dragged in greediness and shame. Her festival days were spent in lordly tournaments or impious debaucheries, and her homes were all possessed by vice and ignominy. Liberty was abandoned and honor forgotten in the mad courses of twenty licentious years. In reading how Florence was raised from the dust in which she lay, we read the story of Savonarola.

II.

Girolamo Francesco Savonarola was born of a noble Paduan family, in Ferrara, on the twenty-first of September, 1452. The times, in which this birth happened, were full of troubles and changes.

The Church of Rome, long the source of good, was become the fountain of evil to the world. Its virtue and its power were both failing fast. Cathedrals might still be filled with kneeling crowds, and anthem harmonies might still rise up into heaven-like domes, but worship in all its magnificence, was worship of knee or lip or ear. The purification of the Church was still the hope of true hearts. Men were not yet ready to abandon Rome, although Rome seemed to have abandoned them. The noble depended upon its indulgences, the scholar loved it for its learning, and the poor clung to it in confiding ignorance. But while priests were profligate, and popes were faithless to all Christian hopes, it was in vain that reliance, affection, and confidence were given to a Church which did not deserve even its name. Rome, the city, was wet with blood and corrupted by gold. A Vice-Chamberlain's reply to one who reproached him with the venality of his government, that it was for "the wicked to *pay* and live,"* is a fearful expression of darkness, such as was then settling upon the Church and upon the age by which the Church was still acknowledged. The characters of the different popes who succeeded to each other, during the latter half of the fifteenth century, may be taken, separately or

* The story is really to be found in Sismondi, *Hist. des Rep. Ital.* Tome VII., p. 264.

collectively, as representing the priests and, in a less degree, the people whom they governed. One was a scholar, like Pius Second (Eneo Silvio); another was a brawler, like Sixtus Fourth; one other, worst of all, an enemy to God and man, was Alexander Sixth, the Borgia, the adulterer, the murderer. It is strange to follow these men, who were exalted above the world, that the world might learn not only to fear them, but to fear the faith by which they had been magnified, and watch the gradual approach of a time, when such as these were to be rejected and put to shame. Savonarola's life was spent in struggles against the crimes, by which his religion was polluted and his home was made desolate. The Archangel's warning had been completed:

“Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves”;*

and Christendom was become like a desert, its monuments and its dwellings covered deep with sand. Yet it was not at once known how many things were changed, or how many were still to be changed. The most earnest purpose, prevailing among men, was to build up again upon the very sands which had swept over their old hopes. Not even Savonarola, prophet as he thought himself, knew how to look beyond wastes in which he could find no shelter, no repose, to a promised land. Yet neither he nor they, among whom he

* *Paradise Lost*, xii. 503. Or Dante, *Paradiso*, xxvii. 55 = 57.

lived, are to be mistaken. It was an age of many vicissitudes; old things were departing, new things were coming; life was disturbed, minds were hurried; and we need not doubt the perplexity, the restlessness, and the weakness which were natural to the times.

The strength of the Church was still maintained by art, by poetry, and by philosophy, the three great voices of humanity. A simple roll of names is clearer than any general principles. In art, there were Masaccio, a man so gifted that none could even imitate him for half a century after; Verrocchio, who watched over the hopeful studies of Vinci and Perugino; Ghirlandajo, whom Michelagnolo was never weary of praising as his master; Perugino, himself, whose exceeding glory was in his scholar Raffael: there were these, and many more, devoted, all, to expression of that faith which they and their world believed. There were poets, Boiardo and Politiano, Pulci and Benivieni, singing aloud of loves and festivals, but echoing, also, the deeper sounds of superstition and prayer. In the very year after Savonarola's birth, Constantinople fell into the hands of the Turks, and its long agony was ended. Its learning and its scholars were hurried away to the western states of Europe, where welcome and support were sure. The first influence of these new minds, living and dead, was favorable to the Church of the Middle Ages, now departed. The

most earnest students were the most devout believers in Rome; and the confusion of ancient philosophy and recent theology was for a time continued by such as Cardinal Bessarion, Ficino, and even the wonderful Pico della Mirandola, all thorough scholars. Even the earlier remonstrances which Lorenzo Valla had uttered against Rome, and the later opposition made by Pietro Pomponazzi to the philosophy on which the faith of Rome was staked, seem to have come out from wandering intellects rather than from resolute souls. The only object in reading these names here is to comprehend the spiritual bearings of Savonarola's age. He was not a Protestant like Luther, the men about him would not have acted with him if he had been; but he was the very martyr of such strivings against evil in material and in moral things, as were congruous to Italy and to the fifteenth century. He could do no more, as a great man, than help forward, by his own devotion, the longings which were felt by many, though there was none to labor for them and die for them like Savonarola.

It is not so easy to trace the decline of Liberty as to discover the actual decay of Religion in Italy. Any history will make it plain that in Savonarola's time, and in Savonarola's country, there was no real liberty existing; but our enquiries must stretch farther, even to comprehending the course

of things which were so early ended. The old freedom of the Italian cities,—where was it then? The citizens who were free in the Middle Ages,—or their descendants, — where then were they?

The liberty of the Italian cities, in their best days, it must be recollected, was not such liberty as would be accepted in our own times. Any one city, as a political state, comprised three classes among its people, nobles, citizens, and laborers, each as remote from the other, as though their interests and their associations had never been, or never were to be united. In early times, the nobles were most powerful; their birth, their pomp, their warlike habits gave them secure control over all the political rights which others beneath them claimed. But in the common course of human destinies, this overshadowing power of rank and arms was brought to the ground. Industry and commerce were fast increasing, and with them there grew up new influences of wealth and luxury. The nobles fell away; their pure blood flowed feebly in their veins; their iron armor hung heavily on their limbs. To them succeeded the merchants, the masters, the citizens of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, through gradual but never silent revolutions. Their dominion of gold was as exclusive as the nobles' dominion of iron had ever been, and the liberty, which belonged to their cities, was scarcely increased by any liberal principles or any liberal institution of the

newly risen citizens. The greatest hindrance to progress in liberty, progress in peace, progress in virtue, arose from the factions, into which nearly every Italian city was divided; countrymen to countrymen, friends to friends, brothers, even, to brothers, they were all set against each other and against themselves, with hateful cries upon their lips and bloody weapons in their hands. There could be no freedom in such strifes as were everywhere prevailing. Villani, the early historian, declared that "the Florentines were of loyal souls, faithful one to another, and desirous of being likewise faithful in their country's affairs;" but their desires and their fidelity were equally imperfect. It was in a game of foot-ball * that the old burghers of Florence first won their liberty from the nobles; but their game was a short one; the magistrates they chose, and the offices they established, were all gone from them in ten years' time. The lower classes were continually abused, even when the industry, to which their labor was indispensable, had grown into influence and honor. As the

* This was the favorite game in the old city of Florence. It was played upon one of the public squares by a number of champions, chosen from out the higher classes only, wearing different colors, and struggling together with as much eagerness as though their game had been a pitched battle. On the 20th of October, 1250, the citizens not only drove their ball beyond the bounds, but arming themselves hastily, they forced the Podestà, a foreign magistrate, to resign his office, and then set up themselves, a new government of Citizen Counsellors, (Anziani.)

nobles had yielded to the citizens, the citizens were, in their turn, very near yielding to the laborers and the workmen; but these poorer classes were too weak, too ignorant, to overcome the wealth, the power, and the knowledge, by which they were pressed down. Any tumult, merely popular, that is started and continued by the lower people, was soon subdued by the magistrates and the upper classes to which the magistrates belonged. All Italy was in confusion, and those states of Italy which were freest were most confused. There was no security of life or property : no maintenance of order or law ; no increase of real liberty. According to the constitution of government which lasted longest in Florence, the six Priors at the head of affairs were actually imprisoned in the public palace, during the two months of their magistracy ; yet the title of these magistrates was no less an one, than "Priors of Liberty."

The story of Giano della Bella is entirely a commentary upon Florentine Freedom. He was a man of noble birth, who abandoned his title and his privileges either for the sake of his own interests, or, as we would rather believe, for the sake of his fellow-citizens, who needed some helper in the distress to which they were reduced. Giano was made a Prior, and he then came forward among the people, to accuse the crimes which had been committed by the nobles, and to demand new powers, such as the magistrates needed in order to

protect the lower citizens. His appeal, made in passionate language, was answered by passionate voices. A commission of citizens was instantly named to secure the justice and the liberty which all Florence knew to be failing; and some hundred ordinances (*ordinamenti della giustizia*) were soon after published, by which all the most noble families were forever excluded from holding any chief offices of the republic. In proportion to the strength and the oppression that had been exercised by the nobility, were the degradation and the injustice then done to them. The new laws, set up in place of the old, were the laws of a quarrelsome democracy, if a state can be called by such a name in which the citizens, the tradesmen, the merchants, were alone powerful. Were Giano della Bella the true patriot that he seems to be, he was surely dismayed by the working of his own reforms. The trader-priors began with razing some houses of the nobility to the ground; the laws, by which they pretended to govern, were every day more disordered; the people of citizens not even pretending to obey, was growing seditious; the nobles were recovering their courage and their strength; and new tumults were chasing each other through the streets of Florence, always tumultuous, if not always free. Giano dared to undertake a second revolution far more difficult than the first, in which his good purposes had utterly failed. "Perish the republic!" he cried,

“and me with it, rather than endure these iniquities!” But his efforts were defeated, his good name, even, was slandered, and he was forced to fly from his home, (1294,) dying afterwards in exile. “It was a dreadful loss to our city, and most of all to our poor people,” says Villani, “for he was the most loyal man and the most sincere republican in Florence.”*

It is plain, then, that Italian liberty was neither complete in principle nor enduring in progress. As a birth-right, as a gift of God to all humanity, it was never, at any time, nor in any place, acknowledged. Even in the years before Savonarola's birth, it had come, when it came at all, with the success of factions triumphing over each other in the same city; and, to be free, it was then more necessary to be a Guelph or a Ghibeline, than to be a Florentine. But in the years of Savonarola's youth, these factions were all passed away, and such republics, as had breath enough left to claim the name, in Italy, were only phantoms of what they had once been. Lucca and Sienna were reduced to mere oligarchies; Bologna was fallen beneath the dominion of the Bentivoglio family; Genoa accepted or refused her masters, just as they chanced to come and go away; Milan had no other government than abso-

* This quotation is taken from Sismondi, who may be consulted for a more detailed account of Giano della Bella. *Hist. des Rép. Ital. Tome III. Chap. I.*

lute monarchy; and Florence wore the chains hung upon her, as has been said, by the Medici. Dante would still have called his country *Serva Italia*, Italy the Slave,* and yet it was ever the same *Italia bella*, Italy the Beautiful. The greatest part of Italian cities had submitted to successful adventurers. Chiefs of parties established themselves as tyrants of a whole people, by no other right than that of triumph.

Che le terre d'Italia tutte piene
Son di tiranni, ed un Marcel diventa
Ogni villan *che parteggiando viene.*†

These three lines tell the whole story of freedom's ruin in Italy. When a faction had once prevailed against its enemy, it found that there was a necessity of yielding its new power to the leader it had hitherto followed for its own sake. The leader became the lord, and the lord became the tyrant over followers and over adversaries. This might happen suddenly, or it might happen gradually; but in either way, the issue was the same. The day of freedom and the day of union were ended together, and together the day of tyranny and the day of separation began.

It was in Savonarola's life-time that Henry Seventh, Louis Eleventh and Ferdinand the Ca-

* Turn to the mournful lines of the *Purgatorio*, Canto vi. 76, &c.

† "For the countries of Italy are all full of tyrants, and every countryman, *who succeeds in faction*, becomes a lord."—From Dante, *Purg.* vi. 124–126.

tholic gave expression from their thrones to the spirit which ruled all men. There seemed to be no other principles of government left, than cunning, covetousness, and falsehood. Throughout Italy, the policy of Venice was accepted as a model for all policies ; and, so long as strength and endurance were gained at all, it mattered very little how they were gained. Political reform was quite as necessary as any other reform. Savonarola, as we may read, was himself a political reformer, although he never professed to have much acquaintance with merely political principles. The materials were scattered ; the moulds were broken and shapeless ; and we need not look for any image that shall be perfect in our eyes. In truth, the things to be changed were things unseen. The character of men had been degraded according to the character of tyrannies above them, and the reform of human governments needed a reform of human lives. Some signs of noble spirit were still shown in the conspiracies of that same period, in such, of course, as arose from noble motives ; and it was by conspiracies, blood-stained as they were, that common rights seemed to be brought within reach of common men. One of the most striking episodes in the history of Italian liberty is the story of Girolamo Olgiati, who, with two companions, slew Galeazzo Sforza, the hateful duke of Milan, to avenge not only the dishonor of his sister, but the miserable

slavery of his countrymen. Olgiati was instantly seized by the duke's soldiers, and was afterwards tried by torture beneath the eyes of hired judges. A confession he wrote before them declares his confidence in the goodness of the cause for which he suffered so young, and he was only twenty-two years old. His death was worthy of his pure and dauntless spirit. The executioner, in tearing his flesh, forced from him a cry of anguish, but he calmed himself instantly, and with his last breath murmured, *Mors acerba, fama perpetua. Stabit vetus memoria facti!* That his efforts in Milan's behalf should so utterly fail, is proof, not only of the strength in which tyrannies were established, but quite as much of the feebleness with which people submitted to them, throughout long abused Italy.

Florence, renowned and beautiful beyond all other cities in Italy,* had long preserved its independence and its pride amid the wrecks by which it was thickly surrounded. It could not escape the storms of faction and bloodshed which were brought upon it by Guelphs and Ghibelines, the Ricci and the Albizzi, the Ciompi and the changeful Balie. Yet during all this violence, all this license, even while temperance and wisdom were

* "Egregia città oltre ad ogni altra Italica bellissima," as its adopted son, Boccaccio, exultingly exclaimed.

put aside, the city grew in wealth and art and fame. The ancient nobility, among whom were great names still, lost their influence, and were, at last, deprived by statute of all political power. This was really the severest loss which the institutions of a State like Florence could have suffered. The places of such men as Farinata degli Uberti, the preserver of Florence after the defeat of the Guelphs at Arbia,* or such as Tornaquinci, who fell with both his sons in defending the Carroccio or War-Chariot of the republic, could never be supplied by mercenaries or common citizens. The merchants who would have governed a city, as if it had been a bale of merchandise, prepared its downfall and their own. The great family of the Medici usurped superior authority in Florence, almost insensibly, and almost entirely unresisted. Their rule was really better suited to the character of the people who submitted to them, than the rule of the rich men, from whose hands power had slipped, at the very time when Florence was shaking off the rusty chains of Dark Ages, and rising to the first place in our modern

* "Know ye," so said Farinata to the Ghibelines, with whom he was then victorious, and who were much inclined to destroy the city which was Guelph at heart, "know ye, that though I were alone of all the Florentines alive, I would not suffer my country to be destroyed; nay, if it be necessary to die for her a thousand times, I am ready to die a thousand times for her." These words are related by Aretino, according to Sismondi, *Hist. des Rép. Ital.*, Tome II., Chap. 9. See the tenth Canto of the *Inferno*.

world. Physically, it mattered little to the Florentines, that they had lost all real independence; but morally it mattered much, that they should forget to depend upon themselves, and should be content to abandon the liberties which were their fathers' pride and their fathers' safety. Yet it was hard to see things, then, as we now can look upon them. Agriculture had never made the valley of the Arno more smiling; industry had never worked greater wonders in the city of *arti* and *mestieri*, the peculiar city of Arts and Trades; commerce had never extended itself farther to find luxuries abroad which were magnificently used at home; even learning, newly born, found shelter and nourishment within the walls, rather within the very hearts of Florence; all was abundant there but freedom and piety, and without these life here and hope hereafter fail.

Machiavelli and Savonarola, both reformers, express, each in his own way, the desires which belonged to these restless times. The one proposed political reform alone, holding that all things were to be accomplished by force and treachery. The principle of his greatest work is power, no matter how obtained nor how exercised. He had no faith in mankind, and the energies he gave his country sprang from gloomy and ungenerous feelings. This one was Machiavelli. The other, Savonarola, believed in higher aid than he could

find on earth, and not only labored, but prayed for peace and holiness. His heart, *sotto l'usbergo di sentirsi pura*, protected by its own purity, was filled with love for his fellow-beings, and to them he devoted his virtue and his faith. He was sometimes fanatical, sometimes stern, sometimes wrong; but he believed himself to be the instrument of Providence, and fell a willing victim to Truth, like Socrates. The children of Italy have been born to sad inheritance. We, far away, may dream of winning loveliness, or melodious voices, or Heaven's gentlest reflections, as alone belonging to that southern land: but winds, sweeping from the past, come laden with clouds and tears across its skies. Some fruitful promises are just now unfolding themselves in Italy, and many a heart dares to believe that the life of long-lost years may be renewed. The memory of such as Savonarola is an evening and a morning-star.

Milton's description (in the first book of *Paradise Regained*) of a solemn childhood, might well be repeated of Savonarola's earliest years. The boy's heart was warm, but he had more fondness for seclusion and studies than for companionship and amusements, which are to most men their happiest memories. His grandfather Michele, a distinguished physician, who had been personally invited to the Ducal Court of Ferrara, and his father Niccolò, lavished their tenderness and wis-

dom upon his education. Savonarola's seriousness was only interrupted by that passionate love of poetry, which is a birthright of all Italians. In philosophy and theology he followed the teachings of Thomas Aquinas, "the Angelic Doctor" of the Middle Ages; and, as the teacher had been a Dominican friar, so the disciple inclined to take orders with the Dominican brotherhood, and at the age of twenty-three he entered their convent at Bologna. He

"already was prepared
By his intense conceptions to receive
Deeply the lesson deep of love,"

and the longings of his heart for faith and devotion were satisfied in a life of sacrifice.

At first he was unwilling to partake of the common pursuits of the monks among whom he had chosen to dwell, but his excellence and maturity of mind were soon discovered to his superiors, and both at Bologna, and in St. Mark's convent of Florence, where he presently repaired, he was appointed public lecturer in philosophy. When he began to preach, during his first residence in Florence, being then about thirty years old, he failed entirely in manner and in language; yet he was not discouraged, and among the calmer studies of his own cell, he prepared himself to fulfil the promises, which to his watchful hopes must have been already revealed. A few months after this first disappointment, he was sent on some priestly

mission to Lombardy, where he remained for several years, preaching and lecturing with fast-increasing influence. One of Lorenzo de' Medici's friends happened to meet Savonarola, in the north, and was so much amazed with his earnestness and piety of spirit, that he prevailed upon Lorenzo to invite the return of the eloquent monk to St. Mark's. This friend, not to Lorenzo alone, but to Florence and the Catholic world, was the great scholar Pico della Mirandola. He wrote, at this time, *che non gli pareva più poter vivere senza lui*, that he could not live apart from such a man, and to the day of his death he was Savonarola's faithful hearer. Savonarola gladly accepted the summons, and came back to Florence in 1489, from which year his great public career may be said to have been begun. He was then thirty-seven years old; his youth was past, but all the glow of manhood was upon him still.

III.

Within the first year after his return to Florence, Savonarola had so won the confidence of his brethren, that they made him their prior in St. Mark's. He was born to authority among men. Ever since the Medici were first in power, it had

been a custom with all the Florentine convents, that their newly elected priors should present themselves before the chief of the ruling family, to express to him the respect of their fraternities. Savonarola refused to make this visit to Lorenzo, declaring that he owed his office to higher authority than that of any man. The monks were greatly alarmed, but Lorenzo, far from resenting this rudeness of their prior, rather sought to attract an honest spirit by graceful kindness; yet there was no way to open which Savonarola was willing to follow towards Lorenzo. The simple monk dared to refuse the great lord's gifts, which had no charm for his plainness and integrity of life. He was one among very few who could see the gloomy influences which were behind the Medici's pageantry, and then he would neither yield to nor seek at all. Lorenzo is said to have entreated or commanded Savonarola to cease from public preaching of the tribulations which were about to fall upon Florence, but the prophet was even more seditious than the prior, although he seems to have refrained, at least, from any open reproaches to Lorenzo or the Medici.

Yet a little while and Savonarola stood by Lorenzo's death-bed. The poet, the patron, the tyrant, was drawing feebler breath every hour. His heart, never hardened, humbled itself to ask absolution from that pure and unstained spirit which had been tempted in vain. Savonarola's charity was

sincere, but it exacted much repentance in return. Without making any unseasonable discourse to the dying man, the confessor asked a declaration of full faith in God's love, and, as an earnest of a faith so solemn, a promise that all things which had been unjustly acquired in the life now nearly ended, should be surrendered while there was yet time. The declaration and the promise were both made; but when the confessor claimed the restoration of liberty to Florence, the dying lord made no reply, unwilling, perhaps, to make this sacrifice, perhaps, to promise what he was no longer able to fulfil. Savonarola turned away and left Lorenzo to die unshrived. With such sternness we can have no sympathy; and it seems but little to have forgiven political transgressions, that are since almost forgotten among the better memories of Lorenzo's life.

The associations which connect in history these two chief men of Florence, are entirely characteristic of Savonarola, but they are not altogether honorable to him. His refusal to meet Lorenzo de' Medici or to accept offers which other men would have crawled on their knees to gain, sounds like perfect heroism. But it is much to be questioned, if the prior, by shutting himself up sulkily in his convent, did half so much good, even by such an example, as he might, perhaps, have done by acknowledging the protection which all Florence acknowledged, in order, afterwards, to possess some influence over the authority

which all Florence obeyed. Lorenzo was full of quick-flashing sensibility that Savonarola might have fired and extinguished, almost as he pleased. He was the very man to win confidence from a glowing mind, and we have a right to fancy that he could have persuaded Lorenzo, in life, to do something towards the fulfilment of that justice it was too late to demand from him, in death. But in these brief stories are all the honesty and all the severity which distinguished the Florentine reformer.

The place which Savonarola filled in Florence, at the time of Lorenzo de' Medici's death, was already large and eminent. The seeds he was earnest to sow in men's hearts were springing up in freshness and virtue. As yet, he belonged to his convent more than to the great world, and lived among his brethren in deep tranquillity. Almost daily then, he led his monks without the city walls, finding "sweet shrines" for them and for himself, among choral-sounding trees and incense-breathing flowers. Or he would sit in the convent garden for hours, content to train the simple souls that trusted in him, to gratitude and piety. Savonarola believed in nature's own holy teachings. His mind was full of poetry, which often escaped its quiet bounds, bearing him on to mysticism and even to fanaticism. He believed himself, at length, to be an inspired man, commissioned to work miracles and to utter prophecies. His frequent predictions were mostly declared upon

common events it was easy to foresee, but their fulfilment gained for him the reverence of the people whom he wished to guide. He was guileless as a child, and if he ever deceived others, he was himself deceived. So far, at least, he was a true prophet, that he prepared the way of Religion and Freedom among his countrymen. It would be wrong to believe him satisfied with dreamy mysticism. His days were never lost in

“ Letting down buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up ; ”

for he was, honestly, a practical reformer. What he did was done sometimes prematurely, sometimes hastily, but it was his solemn purpose to give the world, in which he lived, the purity he loved to seek in an ideal world.

The instruments, which Savonarola employed in his great labor of reform, by speech and by action, were chiefly these three : simplicity, strength, and fervor. He was unsuccessful, at first, in preaching, but thoughts like his can never perish for want of air, and when he returned to the Cathedral-pulpit, after renewed preparation, he was graceful, eloquent, and triumphant. The dust which other preachers threw in men's eyes, he washed away with words that

“ dropped like Heaven's serenest snow,
And all was brightness where they fell.”

His cordial voice came like music to weary minds. Burlamachi, a Dominican friar, who

wrote a contemporary biography of Savonarola, speaks with great enthusiasm of his "ardent and devout countenance," his "graceful gestures," his voice "like a trumpet," his language "living, clear, and full of sanctity." He was another Amos, even as he described the ancient prophet, "a shepherd and a simple man, whom God had chosen." He knew no fear in his hatred of vice, no measure to his love of virtue. His sermons, of which many have been preserved by the care of those who wrote them down after hearing them, are his own history. As mere compositions they are of little value, but as fervid and practical exhortations to all good things, they may well be read and followed still. "I must preach to you," he said to the Florentines, "because God has commanded me to do so for your good; your wickedness is plain, and to me have been revealed the punishments to come upon you, unless you shall embrace a more perfect and Christian life." He began (1489,) with preaching in the church of his own convent, St. Mark's, but in the next year, the crowd to hear him was so great, that he was obliged to preach to them in the Cathedral. His sermons were never written; what he said to his people came, as they knew, straight from his heart; and, although there might have been little method and less elegance in his words, there were sincerity and energy, such as give to eloquence its greatest power. He prayed, and his people prayed with

him; he broke into passionate exclamations, and they could follow him; he wept, and their tears and his were mingled. He often spoke to them of their duties as citizens as well as of their duties as men.*

There is no point in the history of Savonarola's reforms more worthy of being well remarked than the comprehensive unity of their nature and design. He was neither perfectly wise nor perfectly bold, but such plans as he could make were limited neither to Church alone, nor to State alone; they comprehended both by one larger plan of humanity, in which all lives, all duties were numbered. Savonarola preached for eight years to the same people, but their zeal never failed. They filled the churches in which he preached; they gathered about him in the streets through which he walked; they sought his counsel in the convent, at times when he was not to be seen among men. Those sermons which remain, bear witness to the single-hearted faith of the reformer, to the hopes he cherished of bringing men nearer to Heaven, to the Christian longings of his overflowing spirit. He, and they who heard him, are long passed away, but the prayers breathed every day, in the

* "Citadini miei,—such appeals as this are very frequent,—quando voi andate su nei vostri consigli, se voi foste umili, Iddio vi illuminaria; se voi non foste ambiziosi e tanto superbi, voi avreste fatte ora mille cose che non avete fatte." These words are from one of Savonarola's sermons.

Cathedral of Florence, are like echoes to his preachings and to his people's devotion.

Meanwhile, we are to remember, that the worldly interests of Florence were changing rapidly. Pietro de' Medici, who succeeded without difficulty to his father's authority, was weak in character and wild in life. Although he had been watchfully educated by Angelo Politiano, and was really a young man of much accomplishment, he was headstrong and careless of his countrymen's affection. To them it was really "servitude, to serve the unwise," and the power of the Medici became less to their eyes. Then came Charles VIII. across the Alps from France, followed by a brilliant army, which he had devoted to ambitious hopes of adventure in Italy. We have to meet him in Florence, only, where the approach of youth and power, like his, must have kindled the hopes of colder hearts than Savonarola's. It was the universal belief that the French king was to become the regenerator of Italy; that his protection would bring strength, and his command give union, to a weak and sundered people. Pietro de' Medici, himself, was much disposed to resist Charles's coming; but, when the evil day was close at hand, and no preparation had been yet made to defend Florence, he went to meet the French and delay their march, as if they had been beasts to be drawn after any plunder, by throwing open some of the Florentine fortresses

that lay in their way. At this, the people he left behind him rose up, in despair, to save their dishonored city from ruin. The Medici were all driven out, and, with one brave struggle, the republic set itself free. Savonarola was the counsellor of those who loved liberty, and, to protect them, he went forth himself, at the head of an embassy to Charles, welcoming him and claiming his protection. The bold priest found favor in the king's eyes, and Savonarola returned to Florence with fair promises and hopeful predictions. Dark as things were, the prophet's eye caught glimpses of light beyond the clouds, and the prophet's voice was lifted up in cheerful confidence. Alas! that the prophet, even Savonarola, was deceived!

Eight days after the expulsion of the Medici, the French king entered Florence, rather as a conqueror than a protector, followed by his best troops under arms. Savonarola believed that all was well; but there were men more skilled than he in this world's ways, who knew that their homes were in peril from the strangers. Peasants well-armed were presently collected in every house, and the walls were garrisoned by the Condottieri of the republic. There was little wish on either side for open hostilities; the Florentines did not fear the French more than the French mistrusted the Florentines; but when Charles offered terms of protection it would have been dishonorable to accept, they were instantly and

boldly refused. Pietro Capponi, the chief secretary to the government, tore in pieces the papers which were presented to him from the king, crying out to the French commissioners all amazed, "If such things be demanded, then blow your trumpets, and we will ring our bells."* King Charles obeyed the generous impulses, which were really in him, and made more honorable proposals to the people so manfully defended. But his councillors came between him and his mercy, and persuaded him to deny the very offers he had made.† The Florentine magistrates heard by mere chance of the danger which was threatening them, and betook themselves to Savonarola. "It is you," they must have said, "O prior, it is you who did persuade us to put our trust in this wild king; go you, now, unto him and defend us, defend our city against his evil will." Though Savonarola's confidence in Charles must have been shaken, he could still bid his friends be of good cheer. He went to the king, and, finding access through royal guards to his presence, spoke, as one who feared God alone, of the pledges Charles himself had made, and which could not now be

* A verse by Machiavelli bears pleasant testimony to his daring :

"Lo strepito dell' armi e de' cavalli
Non potè far sì che non fosse udita
La voce d'un *Capponi* fra tanti *Galli*."

† That Florence should recover the fortresses surrendered by Pietro de' Medici, on payment of 120,000 florins, or 300,000 dollars.

broken, without bringing shame and disaster upon his arms. The king's better purposes returned as he listened to words so bold as these, and a day or two after, he left Florence with all his army, to pursue in the south his brief and brilliant enterprise. Florence was saved, and Savonarola, in the face of his own prophecies, was her preserver.

Our place is still at Savonarola's side, among men and things around him. The Florentines had won back their freedom, and had escaped the sword of the invaders, but they had not found peace among themselves. The great mass of the citizens, bearing the names of *Frateschi* or *Piagnoni*, Brethren or Weepers, followed or pretended to follow the religious principles which Savonarola maintained. A few rich merchants and some fewer nobles, although really attached to the interests of the exiled Medici, under the obscure name of *Bigi*, or Greys, were generally willing to act with the Weepers. The young nobility, hostile to the stern reforms of Savonarola, enrolled themselves as *Arrabbiati* and *Compagnacci*, Madmen and Evil Companions, names which explain themselves. These men, Weepers, Greys, and Evil Companions, were all bitterly opposed to each other; their city was well-nigh lost in confusion; but its reformer knew no fear, and dared even from elements like these to shape and fulfil his political reforms. The government he pro-

posed, and which the city accepted after some months spent in other experiments, was very simple in its forms. A Grand Council of eighteen hundred citizens, whose fathers had possessed any ancient offices, from whose body eighty members were chosen to form a smaller Council, comprised, with some chief magistrates, the entire supports, on which the new destinies of the state rested. Two or three years afterwards, all young men, in Florence, between the ages of twenty-four and thirty, were admitted to the Grand Council, and in this increase of councillors the state received its most democratic development. Of this government Savonarola was the creator, and by this chiefly, although he confessed it to be imperfect, by this chiefly is he known as a political reformer.

He never professed to be a master of political science, but he was almost alone in maintaining the principle, to us so plain, that a government must be judged according to its good or evil influence upon its people.* In many of his political reforms is reflected the spirit of the age, and his desire for power and unity in Italy led him to prefer the undivided authority of a king, although his love of liberty was too strong to be sacrificed to any political theories. But, seeing how warmly the love of republicanism was returned to the

* These are his words : "Essendo l'unione e pace del popolo il fine del governo."

Florentines,* and how unwilling they would have been to acknowledge any other sovereignty than their own, he gave them what they asked of him, an honest and open framework for their party-colored lives. His laws were founded upon the precepts of Christian faith: "Every citizen must abandon sin and strive to perfect this government in the fear of God . . . That government alone being perfect, which, with all diligence, seeks to increase the common weal by bringing men to virtue, and inclining them especially to God's worship." He would have had religion familiar to men in their council chambers, as well as in their homes. But although Savonarola believed that the wisest laws were the best, practically, not theoretically, he was deceived by his own ardent aspirations, into believing that the Florentines were good enough to be ruled by spiritual principles alone. He guarded them well against sedition and tyranny, and seemed to think that he had protected them against all other evils by proclaiming Christ to be their king. Could those restless men have submitted to Christ's mercy, as they did, but a few years later, to man's tyranny, their city would have been God's City upon the earth. But such faith was impossible to spirits less fervent than Savonarola's, and when he set

* Who were besides, as he said of them, "*popoli che sono ingegnosi ed abbondano di sangue e sono audaci.*"

upon a human state the mark of his own mysticism, he set upon it the seal of decay. Yet there is no heart too cold to be warmed by the same hopes, which Savonarola trusted, of seeing men live as God's subjects, even while they acknowledge the dominion of some fellow-man.*

Quidquid illud accidet,
Juvabit ore personasse Christum.

So far, the prophet seems to be honored in his own country. But the priests of Rome were alarmed by the church-reforms which Savonarola had most at heart, and began to oppose them bitterly. The reformer, himself, was charged with un-

* "Perchè, avendo io predicato molti anni per volontà di Dio in questa vostra città, e sempre proseguitate quattro materie; Cioè sforzatomì con ogni mio ingegno di provare la Fede esser vera: e di mostrare la semplicità della vita Cristiana essere somma sapienza: e denunziare le cose future, delle quali alcune sono venute, e le altre di corto hanno a venire: ed in ultimo di questo nuovo Governo della vostra città: e avendo già posto in iscritto le tre prime; . . . resta che noi scriviamo ancora della quarta materia, acciochè tutto il mondo veda che noi predichiamo scienza sana, e concorde alla ragione naturale ed alla dottrina della chiesa."

These are words introductory to a brief treatise (trattatello) upon the new government which Florence needed. The words which follow express the hopes of Savonarola for that excellence of life to which he was continually calling the Florentines.

"Così in breve tempo si ridurrà la città a tanta Religione, che sarà como un Paradiso terrestre, e viverà in giubilo, e in canti e salmi; e i fanciulli e fanciulle saranno come angeli, e gli nutreranno *nel viver Cristiano e civile insieme*: per gli quali poi al tempo suo si farà nella città il governo più tosto celeste che terrestre, e sarà tanta la letizia dei buoni, che avranno una certa felicità spirituale, in questo mondo."

becoming interference in secular affairs, although many of his brother-priests were far more active in the world's cause or their own, than he. "Any matter," he replied, "ordained to the glory of God and the good of men belongs to my office; and all I do," he added, "oh Florence, is in thy love." Savonarola was disinterested in all things, taking no thought for wealth or power, but looking to a harvest in broader fields. Pope Alexander Borgia, the most monstrous pope that poor, abused Christendom had ever obeyed, began to dread lest Savonarola's voice should be turned against him, and would have, at once, bribed the preacher to silence by the gift of a Cardinal's hat; but Alexander had his answer in the next sermon from that Cathedral pulpit in Florence — "The only red hat I shall ever wear, will be red with my own blood in martyrdom"—and words like these were enough to make any pope shake with fear. It would have been as easy to stay a mountain-torrent by splinters, as to turn Savonarola by bribes from the course he was destined to pursue.

We pass over the long and confused war, between Florence and Pisa, in which the Pisans, feebly aided by the French king, would have freed themselves from the government of their old allies but present oppressors, the Florentines. It is right, however, to say, that Savonarola encouraged his people in fighting to the injury of their neighbors, instead of persuading them, as we should have

imagined, to give the Pisans all the liberty they desired. But it is equally right to say, that the Pisans were quite incapable of governing themselves, and that, having prevailed against the Florentines, they speedily submitted to the control of harder and more distant masters. The war itself was of no possible importance.

Once only, and then but for a short time, Savonarola was absent from Florence during the last years of his life. He went back to Bologna, called there to preach in some festival season. Among the throng which flocked about his pulpit, was the wife of Bentivoglio, lord of Bologna. She came to hear him preach quite constantly, but was often so late and always so pompous in coming, that Savonarola was bold enough, at last, to rebuke her before his whole audience. So singularly offended, she besought her husband to put the insolent priest to death, and Savonarola would have been slain had not the very assassins who surprised him, been stayed by his serenity and resolution. It was in earlier years, as he once journeyed between Ferrara and Mantua, that he happened to cross some river in the same boat with ten or a dozen soldiers. Their licentious manners and blasphemous language moved him to speak with them, and so earnestly did he win their attention, so warmly did he awaken their better feelings within them, that they threw themselves at his feet, confessing their sins aloud and

imploing his pardon. Remembering what the soldiers of his days were, mercenary and debauched men, we can believe that this was no common persuasion which moved hard and forgetful hearts to repentance. Savonarola did not speak in vain, and such spirit obeyed his call, that Florence seemed to be suddenly filled with brave men and virtuous women in the place of its feeble and corrupted people. A famine fell upon the city, but it brought none of its common miseries. The rich took care for the poor; grain was bought in large quantities to be sold again at old prices; money was offered even to the state, without interest; and Florence seemed well deserving of her liberty. A plague followed the famine, and that was a trouble against which benevolence was of little avail; but although the citizens fled their homes, and monks abandoned their convents, Savonarola remained at the side of the sick and dying. "We must put our trust in the Lord," he said, "not in flight;" and he was spared to labor longer in his still abundant vineyard.

The principle of purity was the great principle of Savonarola's reforms. His own words, taken almost at random, are these: "the world is no more quickened with dews from Heaven, but rather, leaving Christian limits, it runneth fast towards paganism." That one word "paganism" expresses the whole spirit of Savonarola's age. So many changes could not be worked, so many

hopes, even, could not be formed, without some confusion and some error. The tendency of things, political, ecclesiastical, philosophical, was towards truth, but there was still a weary and a cloudy separation between truth to come and things as they were. Savonarola could see that the holiest springs of life were becoming turbid, while Christian faith and Christian knowledge were dark with stains.

The treasure-houses of antiquity had been opened to the search of men; but though great stores of learning were found, there was brought from them much that was evil and decayed. The poetry and philosophy of Greece took refuge in Italy, after the fall of the long-crumbling Eastern Empire. The orators and historians and poets of old Rome were restored to the places they had long before lost. Great libraries, such as the Laurentian and St. Mark's, were founded in Florence, and the hidden hoards of the Vatican were begun in Rome. Scholars became the counsellors of Italian states, as Simoneta, the historian, was also Simoneta, the chief-minister, during a troubled regency in Milan. There were men of noble birth, who preferred to any others, the honors they could win by devoting themselves to literature, and one among their number, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, was the most wonderfully accomplished scholar of his time. Even women were attracted to the pursuits, in which their graceful-

ness can be always agreeably contrasted with man's industry, and Cassandra Fidelis, of a Milanese family, deservedly won the name of *Decus Italiæ*. Historians are right to associate this period of Italian history with the name of Lorenzo de' Medici; and just as he was great in some things but not in all things, so to the literature which grew up around him, there belonged two sides, one bright and glorious, the other dark and shameful. The virtue in which the new studies were begun, changed to what may be fairly called vice, as they were continued. Christian names, given in baptism, were abandoned for those of mythology or old story. Nuns bore the name, if not the character, of Vestals: the Virgin was hailed the goddess Mary; Christ our Saviour was called the son of Jove; Providence was known only as fate. Pope Alexander's election was proclaimed as though he were a God, (taken probably for Charon the ferryer to hell:)

Opes quæ sunt tibi, Roma, novus fert deus iste tibi.

Plato was almost worshipped, especially in the house of Marsilio Ficino, the Florentine scholar, who kept a lamp constantly burning before a bust of the great old Grecian; and more faith was given to the philosophy of Aristotle than to the Gospel of Christ. But all "the subtleties of philosophy were like dust" to Savonarola.* He was asked,

* "Sono le suttilità dei filosofi como polvere . . Fanno di questa filosofia e della Scrittura Santa e logica un mescuglio, e questo

he tells us, during his noviciate, why he could spend time or thought upon such an antiquated chronicle as the Bible. Education, itself, became unworthy of Christian understandings. To purify the studies of children and of men, to bring moral and intellectual excellence close together, to fill all minds with sincere and holy knowledge, — to do this was Savonarola's earnest desire, and so far as he was trusted, so long as he was spared, his desire was faithfully fulfilled. The best proof we have of his success, limited as it certainly was, is in the friendships which were given him by the scholars of his time, all alike grateful for the honor to which he would have exalted the best purposes of their lives. Pico della Mirandola loved him; Angelo Politiano, bound to the Medici, was yet free enough to declare his reverence for the learned prior of St. Mark's; Benivieni, the poet, trusted in the preacher's warm spirited promises; Marsilio Ficino, the Platonist, allied himself to Savonarola, the Christian.

The passionate pursuit of new studies in art soon led to errors akin to those which deformed the new studies in literature. The painters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries prepared the day of triumph, whose hero was Raffael, but at very sunrise, there were gathered such clouds about the eastern skies, that their glorious light was for

vendono sopra li pergami, e le cose di Dio e della Fede lasciano stare." [From a Sermon.]

a moment dimmed. What the French sculptor, Falconet, said of Michelagnolo, *J'ai vu Michel Ange, et il est effrayant*, is only partly, but very really, descriptive of art in those years when Angelo was young, himself studying in the academy which Lorenzo de' Medici established in Florence. Palace-walls and church-altars were often haunted by evil shapes of painting and sculpture, too evil to be even told. Music itself, holiest of arts, became discordant and impure, and was, at last, abandoned to the orgies of a southern Carnival. Savonarola would have restored all the simplicity and purity which had been taken away from art. He knew that harmonies are dear to Christian souls, and with their breath would have driven forth the evil spirit which was in the world. He knew how men love beauty, and would have clothed it in white robes, emblems of innocence and majesty. The artists of Florence, such as Andrea della Robbia, Lorenzo di Credi, and Botticelli,* all devoted themselves to Savonarola's great aims. Baccio della Porta, most warmly of all, shared in the aspirations of the pure-hearted reformer, and at his teacher's death, sought peace within convent-walls, dying an humble friar, but leaving to us the name and works of Fra Bartolommeo.

These manifold reforms, successively begun by

* See note at the end.

Savonarola, were far from being acceptable to many men of his own age, and from their hearts, "hard," he said, "as stones," he turned to younger and fresher ones, whose love was more easily won, and whose hopes were more quickly kindled. He called a new generation, the boys and girls of Florence, around him, and to them he disclosed the long-hidden truths of faith and honor. They, at least, he thought, would gather up the fruits he was planting for the future wants of his country and theirs. The trust he reposed in the innocent promise of children was a feeling akin to adoration. "Angels speak with them," he said in one of his sermons. Savonarola began to preach what may be called a domestic reform in the care of young children; and for them, who were older, he would have had the whole plan of education made larger and holier. While he lived, he was unwearied in teaching those young followers of his prayers; he divided them into associations governed by counsellors, chosen among themselves, and gave them chief parts in the ceremonies of his great holydays.

If we go back, in the last years of Savonarola's life, to the time of Carnival, the old time of tumult and revelry and shame, we shall wait in vain for scenes which were everyday sights through the Medici period. Florence is itself unchanged, its people look upon us with the same dark eyes, and speak to us in the same soft language, but they and

their doings are all unlike what was once there in the holyday city. This Carnival-show is different from the procession we followed on Palm-Sunday. The streets are filled with children, all dressed in white, and wearing the cross which is the sign of their life-long crusade. We can watch them running from house to house, demanding at every door, "in the name of Christ and the Virgin," such objects of luxury and profane art, as each house contains. So soon as their arms are laden with pictures, or dresses, or ornaments, or even musical instruments, they are hastening to the great square. There everything, precious and worthless, bad and good, is thrown upon a huge pile, built up like a pyramid, and crowned with a monstrous figure which means, we are told, the old Carnival itself. Close to this huge image is hung the speedily painted portrait of a Venetian merchant, who just came out with an offer of twenty thousand crowns for this mass of "vanities." The meaning of this is characteristic of the whole ceremony. The "vanities" are the different things which have been brought by the restless children; and some of the excited friars, stalking about the square, declare that the Venetian's effigy shall be burned "as chief of all the vanities," because he was eager to save them from destruction. When the Carnival-pile is crowded and covered, so that it can bear no more, children and friars and people get together, and march,

with much shouting, chanting and (what is rather inconsistent,) alms-gathering, to the Cathedral, where they cross themselves, with a devout prayer, and then return to the great square, the scene of sacrifice. Throwing banners and images upon their huge burnt-offering, they kindle it rapidly, amid sounds of music, bells, and songs. The fire spreads, the whole air seems in a blaze, and the pile cracks and burns and falls, while the crowd joins, with loud rejoicing, in the *Te Deum*. Strange as all this is to us, even after what we have already seen on Palm-Sunday, it is but the natural outpouring of that enthusiasm which Savonarola has awakened among his people.

The alms-gathering, which seemed a contradiction to Savonarola's generous professions, was for the poor, not for him; and the moneys, taken, were collected in a *Monte di Pietà*, a Mount-Charity. All who were needy might then go to this, sure to have their wants relieved by a free loan of any moderate sum. Usury and poverty were stripped of their worst miseries, and as Savonarola's benevolent purposes were more fully known, offerings, from individuals and from government, were so multiplied, that not only one, but three of these "mountains," delectable mountains indeed, were soon raised. The recorded offer of a Jew, to the Florence magistrates, that he would pay them twenty thousand florins, (or fifty thousand dollars,) to prevent the establish-

ment of these charities is abundant testimony to their worth and their usefulness. They deserved the name which they acquired of "pious asylums for suffering humanity," and the example in Florence was followed in other cities of Italy. So, at Savonarola's bidding, there rose these fountains of refreshing waters, at which men athirst could drink and be satisfied.

It was more than two years after the departure of the Medici from insulted Florence, when Signor Pietro, having failed in all his advances towards reconciliation, came back, followed by a goodly number of armed men. Without the gates, which were speedily closed against him, the exile waited for some movement in his favor from within; but, his professed friends, the Greys, choosing, perhaps, to keep themselves dark, until Pietro could do something himself to support them, never an arm was lifted for him, never a voice shouted for him, and, in despair, he turned away once more from the home which refused him, to wander and die, at last, among strangers. But his appearance at the gates of Florence, sternly as it had been met, was followed by fresh troubles among the citizens. The Gonfaloniere, chief magistrate according to the last constitution, at this time, was an old man of honorable family, by name Bernardo del Nero. He was one of the Grey faction, favoring the old state of things, yet never directly opposed to the new, and, like several other eminent citizens of the

same moderate principles, he had been chosen to the high office, which, among such a people as the Florentines, most needed moderation in its exercise. Bernardo del Nero, known, therefore, to be attached to the Medici, was straightway condemned to death, with four other distinguished men of the Greys, for having shared secretly in the plans, which had just failed. This hurried sentence was pronounced upon the five citizens by an extraordinary tribunal, and, without being allowed the common right of appeal to the Grand Council, they were executed on the same day of their trial. Bernardo del Nero was more than seventy-five years old, and, as he said, had little life to lose; but for that little, Savonarola might have pleaded, we must think, and pleaded successfully. It was the time for his voice to be heard, reminding his people that Mercy may walk hand in hand with Authority, and preventing them from doing wrong to justice they professed to honor, wrong to liberty they professed to love. Their state, Savonarola's state, was never Christian, so long as faction or injustice or strife prevailed. One of the principles upon which the reformer had founded his government, was that of severe and even arbitrary punishment of anything like sedition or returning tyranny.* It has

* "*Item, provvedere che chi fosse trovato in fallo senza remissione alcuna fosse punito: perchè chi non è severo in punire, non può conservare i regni.*" This is from his *Trattato del Governo*. According to Guicciardini (*Storia*, Lib. III.), the reasoning among the

been already shown, that the great political objects with all Italians were security and freedom joined in one. But this triumph of the popular party, the Weepers, over Pietro and his adherents, was the beginning of their downfall and of Savonarola's sufferings.

The end of the adventurous journey is drawing near. The Florentine capitalists, unwilling to see their largest sources of money-making buried beneath Mount Charities, are first and foremost among Savonarola's enemies at home. The city-tradesmen find, to their dismay, that half their profits from luxuries are at an end. The elderly citizens are disgusted with things about them so different from their early debaucheries, and the nobles are indignant that they are still controlled by what William Roscoe dared to call the worship of the "golden calf" reformer. This is a sufficiently formidable array, but, led by furious priests from Rome, it was a thousand-fold more dangerous to the simple-hearted man whose faithfulness to the great yearnings of humanity was sorely to be tried. Pope Alexander, raging with fear for himself, twice prohibited the prior of St. Mark's from preaching in Florence, and, at length, charging him with contumacy and heresy, the pope summoned the monk to Rome.

citizens on the point of refusing to del Nero and his fellow-sufferers the appeal they claimed, was this: "*Che le leggi medesime concedono, che per fuggire i tumulti, possono essere le leggi in caso simile dispensate.*"

Savonarola was no theological reformer. However much he might lament the iniquities which filled his "mother-church," he was her steadfast and pious son, even to the end. His arrows were aimed at the priests and not at the altars of Rome. He would have restored to Catholic worship its beauty and solemnity, without changing either its nature or its forms. The age in which he lived was not prepared to deny popedom altogether, but whatever could be its natural expression of hostility to the efforts which popedom was still making to maintain itself, was faithfully declared by Savonarola. He walked in a dim-dawning light; we follow in the glowing noon-time; but it is not our part to deny him, who labored before us in the morning, the glory and the gratitude which he fairly won. The awakening of such a spirit as Luther's was quickened after the early slumber of such a spirit as Savonarola's.

The pope's summons was resisted by the prior, who still possessed much cordial support in Florence. Yet Savonarola abandoned his pulpit to his most trusted follower, Fra Domenico da Pescia, superior of a Dominican convent at Fiesolè, and Pope Alexander was content for the present with this submission. It was a breathing time to the reformer, when he went back to his convent-peace and seemed to forget that there was any other world for him to dwell in; but he came forth, almost too soon, and the unequal strife be-

tween him and his enemies was renewed. All he had now to depend upon was the fast-sinking spirit of his people. Such a storm was raised in Rome, as neither magistrates nor citizens in Florence dared to meet, and the mark of its rage was one brave, single-minded man. The "son of blasphemy," so ran the papal bull, was excommunicated; * and, though it might have been difficult to decide whether Pope Alexander or Friar Girolamo were the real blasphemer, many, who had hitherto been wavering between fear and hate of the reformer, were now encouraged to decide against him, and there was nothing left for Savonarola but to defend himself unto the last. Not yet would he yield his life-long purposes to despair, but, counting upon the love of his better followers, he went back to his pulpit in the early spring-time of 1498. His words were tender and fresh and hopeful even in those dark-winged hours. The warmth of his nature was kindled to fanaticism, and he began to believe that Heaven would sustain him by miracles. We care to hear no more about these prophecies and pretensions of his, than about any forgotten delusions of other men, yet that these were believed in his life-time, is more than proved by the request of Gian Francesco della Mirandola,

* The common causes of this sentence are reported by the Florentine historian Nardi, (lib. III.) "La prima era che essendo citato a Roma, non aveva voluto comparire; la seconda perchè ei predicava eretica e perversa dottrina."

who besought Savonarola to bring back to life his uncle Pico, then dead for many years. Savonarola, himself, once offered to try his supernatural power with any of his adversaries by raising up a corpse from its sepulchre. It is necessary to know these things, and to comprehend the way in which they were known to the Florentines, in order to look back upon Savonarola as he was, not merely as he might have been. As a prophet he was mistaken, just as he was mistaken as a politician ; but there was so much in which he was not mistaken, that there need be no doubt about “ speaking reverently of such a really great man.” * The world, in which his spirit dwelt, was filled with shapes, vast and unreal, which he followed about, until he was lost in their mystery. If he was a fanatic, it was not for his own sake but for his solemn cause; yet we would rather try his strength than his weakness, even as we forget that Alexander called himself the son of Jove, or that Napoleon believed in an unchristian fate. It is easier to do men dishonor than to do them honor.

At last, there came to Florence a hot-brained Franciscan friar, named Fra Francesco da Puglia, commissioned by the pope to preach against the heresies of her reformer on his own ground. He soon gathered about him a motley crowd of Savonarola’s enemies, although his inability to

* “ Io non voglio giudicare . . perchè d’un tanto uomo se ne debbe parlare con riverenza.” *Machiavelli. Disc. sopra Tito Livio. I. 11.*

put down the man they feared by honest argument, was soon proved. Full of disappointment and malignity, Fra Francesco proposed that his truth and Savonarola's should be tried by their passing together through flames. There are many different stories about the manner in which this strange offer was received; but this, at least, is clear, that Savonarola refused the trial for himself, although he was persuaded to consent that his eager disciple Fra Domenico de Pescia should accept it in his place. We can fully share calm Muratori's surprise at "the revival of a trial so terrible and so long forgotten, at the end of the fifteenth century, by monks of Florence, and even with the consent of Girolamo Savonarola, a man not less celebrated for piety than for profound learning." It was not because Girolamo Savonarola was wanting in self-confidence, for he had trusted in himself through more than one hard time; nor that he believed in the efficiency of such struggles against Providence, for he was devoutly humble through all his mysticism; but it was, perhaps, that he feared to lose the people's faith and his disciples' love, by resisting alone a violence of spirit, from which he was himself not wholly pure. Nearly all his monks would have gone through fire or water for their prior, in full faith of being saved alive. Francesco da Puglia, however, refused to expose himself with any other companion than Savonarola himself, but another

Franciscan monk, Fra Bartolommeo Rondinelli, came forward to take the place of Fra Francesco, who was not much of a champion by nature. Pope Alexander was delighted with him, and wrote to the Franciscans as a body, thanking them for this devotion of one among their number to the honor of popedom, now directly set against reform.

The preparations for the fiery trial, eagerly awaited by priests, magistrates, and citizens in Florence, were soon made by ten commissioners, equally chosen from among the Weepers and the Madmen, names more than ever appropriate to passions, themselves flames. A scaffolding, eight feet high, twelve wide, and eighty long, with a space left open in the centre for a passage way, and covered at the sides with earth, on which the fire might be built, was quickly constructed in the public square.

When the day comes, (the seventh of April, 1498,) it brings scenes for us to look upon. In the early morning, Savonarola celebrates high mass, and declares, from the pulpit, his belief in the goodness of his cause, and his trust in supernatural assistance from Heaven. "So far as the result is revealed to me," he says, "I can see that Fra Domenico will pass through the flames uninjured, if the trial be made at all;" but the prophet's eyes were already grown dim. He be-

seeches the prayers of his brethren for their champion, gives them his blessing from a troubled heart, and then, at the head of the Dominicans, walks forth towards the square, followed by men, women and children, bearing lighted torches and chanting, with loud voices, the verse of their familiar psalm, "Let the Lord arise, and let His enemies be scattered before Him."

The square is half filled with troops of armed men, defenders of one party or the other, and with people excited almost to frenzy, by their hopes and fears for the trial before them. Savonarola's appearance is hailed with many different signs of affection and confidence, hate and dread. Five hundred young men of the Compagnacci, Evil-Companions to an evil cause, came with the Franciscans. "Well is it known," cries old Burlamachi, in honest rage, "well is it known that the purpose of these bad men is none other than to kill father Girolamo here, where he stands with us." But father Girolamo has a stout defender named Marcuccio Salviati, a brave soldier himself, who is there with three hundred well-armed men. In the midst of hot and reckless enmity, like this among the Florentines, there is no other chance, it seems, for judging great principles, than by just such an ordeal as Savonarola has accepted, and of this there can be no other issue but failure to him. The magistrates, sitting in state before the public palace on the square, now

name two commissioners from each party to watch over the peace and safety of their people ; but had each commissioner a hundred eyes and a hundred arms, his duty would be mournfully impossible. One half of the Loggia de' Signori, — a portico before which the scaffolding is built, — one half of this is occupied by the Franciscans, the other by the Dominicans. Savonarola and his followers keep on reciting prayers and psalms, while Domenico da Pescia remains kneeling, more in faith, than in doubt of triumph. But neither Bartolommeo Rondinelli, the Franciscan martyr, nor Francesco da Puglia, the renowned proposer of the trial, is any where to be seen. Savonarola, at least, has the advantage of fanatic resolution, but that Savonarola shared all the fevered hopes of his brethren, it is impossible to believe.

The day is cold, and rain is falling upon the people, all parched with expectation. Some sign appears, at last, that the trial is to be made. Men stand with lighted torches upon the scaffolding, and the friars are grouped about their champions before the open chapels. But not yet ; for the Franciscans declare that Domenico da Pescia is protected by some prepared robes, and insist upon his changing them. “ Be it so,” says Savonarola, “ and bid Fra Alessandro take thy robes, Domenico, so that thou shalt wear his through the fire.” Fra Alessandro, one of the youngest Dominicans, hears himself called, — called, as he thinks, to take

Fra Domenico's place,—and, far from fearing unlooked-for danger, cries out, “*Te Deum laudamus*,” and hastens to ask the priest's blessing. There could be given us no more touching proof of the trust which is put in Savonarola by his brethren. Yet again there is delay; and the Franciscans object that Fra Domenico should bear his crucifix through the flames; but to this the Dominicans will not yield, maintaining that “battle should not be done for Christ's sake without Christ's arms.” The populace begin to think that their spectacle is to fail them; and many, weary and wet with rain, go away from the square. The presiding magistrates lose their patience, and order proclamation to be made that the monks retire in peace, not, however, without allowing the commissioners, helpless as they had been, to declare that the Franciscans had prevented the trial by their own obstinacies and fears.

But the followers of the Franciscans are the Evil-Companions, and they, caring nothing whatever about Fra Domenico or Fra Bartolommeo, but very bitterly intent against the reformer they have always hated, are now moving towards the chapel in the Loggia. Savonarola is in danger, but is saved, to-day, at least, by Marcuccio Salviati, who stands forth and marks with his sword a line upon the ground. “He who crosses this line, let him beware!” he cries to the threatening Evil-Companions; and they, seeing his stout form and

his stoutly armed soldiers in their way, give up, for the present, their purposes against Savonarola. Then the prior, still defended by Salviati, leads back his monks to St. Mark's, and there, from his church-pulpit, recounts the confused history of this tedious and unsuccessful day. Night comes, presently, and the worn and exhausted reformer seeks his cell, to dream, perhaps, of peace he will never again have among men.*

The conflict through which Savonarola had sincerely and unflinchingly toiled, was at an end. One day had apparently changed all his earnest hopes into failing memories. His reforms of custom, charity, art, education, government, and worship, were struck down by the issue of a single and a fanatic enterprise. So it seems; but it was not as it seemed. The trial was after more secret forms; the cause depended upon more solemn principles; and the judgment was a judgment of Heaven.

Forty-eight hours after the scenes upon the square were finished, St. Mark's was surrounded, at vespers, by the Evil-Companions, now determined to satisfy their rage against Savonarola. Many of the citizens were with them, either persuaded

* That cell in St. Mark's, composed of two small rooms, is still to be seen. Above the door are these poor words engraved: *Has cellulas, Ven. F. Hieronymus Savonarola, Vir Apostolicus, inhabitavit.* A few pieces of Savonarola's robes are preserved in the convent-sacristy.

that the man to whom they owed so much, had been guilty of great sin in wishing to send a crucifix with his champion, Domenico, into the fire, or blindly borne against him, in spite of better memories. After all his preachings they were eager to have their passions for their laws. Coming through the open street, the mob of Evil-Companions murdered a young man, whom they overtook, reciting his prayers aloud, and, before the convent itself, they slew an artisan, belonging to one of the shops built round St. Mark's, because he came out, "slippers in hand," to remonstrate against their madness. Woe to Savonarola, but greater woe to them!

The convent doors were hastily closed, and the brethren, with some steadfast citizens, gathered round the prior. He would have gone out alone with robe and cross to meet his enemies; but, entreated to remain, he called his disciples, and kneeled in their midst, before the altar, awaiting whatever might befall him, in prayer. One of the principal citizens, Francesco Valori, who came perhaps, as was his wont, to vespers at St. Mark's, now went out to summon Florence to rescue her only real friend from death. The crowd, thundering at the church-doors, fell upon him when he came forth, and murdered him without fear. His death was the omen of Savonarola's destruction. Into the very church broke the Evil-Companions, shooting at the frightened

monks, but gallantly resisted by such citizens as happened to have arms, and to be there with Savonarola.

Darkness and dismay were prolonged through many slow hours;—men were lying dead or wounded upon the church-pavement, and the air was filled with far other smoke than that from incense;—but there, in that scene of sacrilegious uproar, before a dimly-lighted altar, and in the midst of timid-hearted monks, the prior still knelt, praying for them, for himself, and even aloud for his enemies. At three o'clock in the morning, came messengers from the magistrates to summon Savonarola before them. He asked only for protection against the violence of evil men, and then turned to bid his brethren farewell. It was the last time that he spoke to them, and, after all the excitement of that tempestuous night, his words were gentle as when he sat with them beneath the trees of the convent-garden, in peaceful hours. “I am ready,” he tells them now, “to bear all things with joy in the Lord’s love, for in nothing else can a Christian life consist than doing good and enduring evil.” He gave back to the monks the keys of office entrusted to him in better times, and, asking their prayers, as if he had foreboding of what was to come, he went away, leaving them in tears. The ever-faithful Domenico da Pescia and another friar, named Silvestro Maruffi, accompanied their master. They were directly led

to prison, amid the insults of men for whom Savonarola had lived, and for whom he was to die. The branch was broken and trampled down, even by those to whom its blossoms were once a delight as its fruits were now a shame.

IV.

The magistrates, in power at the time of Savonarola's imprisonment, were of wholly different principles, religious and political, from those of the fallen reformer. The tendency of things, ever since the repulse of Pietro de' Medici, had been towards the rejection, sooner or later, of Savonarola. They among the Weepers who were still attached to their chief counsellor, were yet quite unable to save him, and so rapidly did their numbers fail, that to save themselves it was necessary to abandon the faith they had but briefly followed. "No crime," says the historian, Nardi, "now seemed greater than that of having believed in friar Girolamo."

Savonarola, in his prison, looked out upon a changed world from which his labors, full and long, already seemed swept away. Still he was blessed in his own virtue and affection, and, although he himself might be rejected, there was

joy unspeakable and indestructible from what he had done in love for mankind. His reforms had come to an end, not because they were impossible, but because they had been begun too early, continued too imprudently, and carried too far to be secure. He was an enthusiast, and his enthusiasm had deceived him; he was simple-hearted, and his simplicity exposed him to injury; he was stern, even with much charity, and his sternness made him enemies among men whom he could never, perhaps, have made his friends. Yet neither in severity, nor in simplicity, nor in enthusiasm, was there any great wrong that could rise up against his heart, in those dungeon-hours, which were his last. He had "fought a good fight," he had "kept the faith" in which he believed, and, as he had taught men how to live, he was willing to teach them how to die.*

Before the Grand Council of Florence, the very

* Some lines Savonarola wrote, when he was younger, must have returned to his memory :

" Non star, cuor mio, più meco ;
Se viver vuoi in pace,
Vanne a Gesu e sta seco,
Che 'l mondo è sì fallace,
Che ormai a lui non piace
Se non chi è traditore.

" Se tu stai qui in terra,
Sarà tua vita amara,
In ogni luogo è guerra,
E fede, e pace, è rara ;

council created by him whom it was now almost fearful to name aloud, there was one man, and only one, bold enough to defend Savonarola. Agnolo Niccolini declared it "an impious and an execrable deed to stain Florence with the blood of one so great and so rare as father Girolamo;" but though the good Agnolo spoke bravely, he spoke in vain. Sixteen judges, taken from among Savonarola's enemies, were soon collected about him, as if they had been demons rioting over the plunder of a great spirit, and put him to tortures, which his frame was too weak and sensitive to bear. A confession against himself was forced from him, but it was retracted as soon as he was loosened from torment. Again he was bound and torn; again he confessed; again he denied; saying resolutely, that whatever pain might wring from him was all untrue. In the midst of severest agony, he prayed aloud that his persecutors might be softened and forgiven. The blessings of a holy heart were upon him, even in that terrible judgment-chamber.

" Refreshed from heaven,
He calms the throb and tempest of his heart.
His countenance settles; a soft, solemn bliss
Swims in his eye — his swimming eye upraised;
And Faith's whole armor glitters on his limbs!"

Se'l te la vita cara,
Vanne al divin splendore."

Some of these hours of imprisonment were employed in writing a long and earnest exposition of the *Miserere*, which was afterwards printed, and is still preserved.

Savonarola had need of "Faith's whole armor" to protect his spirit against the angry passions which burst upon him from all sides. Pope Alexander, rejoicing with unchristian vehemence, sent to Florence his own commissioners, bearing orders to hasten the condemnation of the long-feared reformer in spite of any proofs of innocence. Before these men and his Florentine judges, Savonarola was again brought out from the prison, where he had been kept more than a month already, and when they had sufficiently charged him with heresy, sacrilege, and sedition, he was condemned, with his brethren Domenico and Silvestro, to be burned.

There was too little left to Savonarola that he should be vexed by love of the world or fear of death. He prayed for his companions on the last morning they were to see, (May 29th, 1498,) and together, they and he went forth to die upon the same square which their festivals had filled with sunshine and devotion. No one of these three was now unfaithful to the solemn memories and the more solemn hopes, which neither popes, nor judges, nor devils could take from them. Already assembled in public, upon the square, were magistrates and prelates waiting, as criminals a reprieve, the end of a life which for them had been spent in vain. There, too, were citizens looking on, some daring to rejoice, but most, it is to be hoped, only fearing

to mourn aloud. Then, among this crowd of witnesses, came Savonarola, earnest as he was always, but serener in look and gentler in manner than he had seemed to the people when they most revered him. A bishop proclaimed that by authority of the pope, Savonarola was separated from the communion of the church triumphant; but "Not so," answered the still resolute friar, "for only from the communion of the church militant can the pope separate me." The three victims, stripped of their priestly robes, were led forward to hear their sentence repeated before all the people, and were then taken to the scaffold. Some one exhorted Savonarola to be of good cheer, for the works he had done would not fail. "Man," he answered, "hath no need of human praise to be contented, nor is this life the time of glory." The confessor, who had been with him through his last hours, asked if he had anything more to say. "No more," was the calm reply, "than to ask your prayers, and to entreat my followers to bear patiently the sufferings my death may bring them." Memorable words of forgiveness and sacrifice! The crowd shouted, as the monks were bound by the executioner, that the time for the prophet's boasted miracles was come, and, lo! the flames, just kindled, are driven back by a gust of wind, and the miracle seems accomplished; yet not so, for again the fire rises fast, leav-

ing still untouched Savonarola's arm, outstretched it was seen, as if to bless his ungrateful people.*

Savonarola was but forty-five years old when he died, "worthy," as Muratori says, "of better fortune." But what that unknown voice spoke to him on the scaffold, that his good works would abide with men, was true in spite of strife and sacrifice. The shepherd was slain, and his flock was driven out from green meadows upon stony lands; but the pastures it was forced to leave, had not given their nourishment in vain. "Let a man do his work; the fruit of it is the care of Another than he."† One Madonna of Fra Bartolommeo's painting, one verse of deeper poetry from Benivieni,‡ one hope of heaven bound to

- * "Dum fera flamma tuos, Hieronyme, pascitur artus,
Religio sanctas dilaniata comas,
Flevit, et O, dixit, crudeles parcite flammæ,
Parcite, — sunt isto viscera nostra rogo."

Marc' Antonio Flaminio.

† *Carlyle*, in his Hero-Worship.

- ‡ "Non può l'inferma nostra oscura e tarda
Vista mortal, dal suo soverchio lume
Vinta in tutto, passar di là del fiume.

"Dal bel fiume gentil, che alcun mortale
Piè non trascende a le celesti rive,
Di cui il bel colle surge, ove chi sale,
Per non mai più morir contento vive,
E dove il nudo mio cor con quelle ale,
Che amor ne impenna a l'alma luci e vive
Salir crede, al cui specchio si fa bello
Il mondo tutto e ciò che alberga in quello."

Benivieni.

earth ; if nothing more were left, Savonarola's work was not a failure. They who came close after, knew that in him they had still a comforter and a benefactor.

——— *Victis jam spes bona partibus esto
Exemplumque mei.*

It was not solitary enthusiasm which led Filippo Neri, to this day the most popular saint in Italy, to keep a bust of Savonarola in his room, or to defend the purposes of a life he looked upon as noble and sincere. A council of church-doctors, in Filippo Neri's time, declared the doctrines of the great reformer to be canonical and catholic. Raffael placed the Florentine prior among the faithful servants of the church in his Fresco of the Sacrament, which is still upon the Vatican walls. Florence, itself, was speedily filled with writings and images, bearing father Girolamo's name, and giving grateful justice to his memory. The blessings of his peace and good-will were bright in contrast with the curses of years which followed, and the place where he died was long after, on the anniversary of his death, strewn thick with green branches and flowers. His writings are now received and read where they were long neglected or forbidden ; his portrait is reverently hung in the palace-galleries of Italy ; his cell in St. Mark's is sacred ground to all Catholic hearts. These things are the signs of justice returning to Savona-

rola. Be they also among many greater signs that give us faith in generosity to man and devotion to God, even when generosity and devotion seem to have been poured out in vain from human souls. The cause, for which Savonarola sacrificed his peace and his life, is still holy. "This work," it was his own prediction, "though I am dead, will go on, for it is the work of Christ." Liberty and Religion are of things eternal.

NOTE.

See page 173.

I add a simple account of the chief among these artists, who entered into Savonarola's reforms. They were famous men in their times, but little is known of them among us.

Andrea della Robbia, who died in 1528, at a very advanced age, was a nephew of Luca della Robbia, known more as the inventor of a varnish, by which his works in *terra cotta* are yet preserved, than as the sculptor of the works themselves. Andrea inherited his uncle's secret, and employed it to his own advantage, although he worked in marble as well as in *terra cotta*. He was a sculptor of mystical and saint-like forms, of which the imaginings must have come from his constant intercourse with Savonarola. Andrea had five sons, two of whom entered the Convent of St. Mark in Savonarola's life-time. The other three followed their father's art, and distinguished themselves at Rome and at the Court of Francis First of France. Vasari says that "this family della Robbia were always the devoted followers of Savonarola, and made likenesses of him after the manner which is still to be seen in their medals."

Lorenzo di Credi died about 1531, seventy-eight years old. He had studied painting together with Pietro Perugino and Leonardo da Vinci, and proved himself worthy to have been their companion. "Lorenzo was very earnest in the sect of Fra Girolamo of Ferrara, (Savonarola,) and lived continually as an honest man and one of good life, making loving use of courtesy wherever he had the opportunity." He was an excellent artist, of tender feelings and graceful expressions. His last years were spent in retirement, to which, it is supposed, he was inclined by sorrows for his friend Savonarola.

Sandro Botticelli, both a painter and an engraver, died in 1515, at the age of seventy-eight. His long life was filled by industry and cheerfulness. His chief works in painting were executed at Rome,

where he was employed by Pope Sixtus IV. to decorate the newly built chapel, which Michelagnolo afterwards glorified. In engraving, then an awkward art, Botticelli's best labor was spent upon "the Triumph of Faith by Fra Girolamo Savonarola, to whose party he was so devoted, that it was the cause of his abandoning his art, . . . wherefore at last he became old and poor."

There were other artists whose names are connected with Savonarola's. One was the architect Cronaca, who had been occupied in the reformer's best days with works in the palace of the Florentine Signoria, and who, when his works and his friend's reforms were ended, had still "such a frenzy for Savonarola's affairs, that he would talk of nothing else than those." Fra Benedetto, a miniature painter, was one of Savonarola's brethren in St. Mark's. He was bold in heart, and devoted to his "father Girolamo." That sad night, when the convent and the church were assailed, Fra Benedetto armed himself and would have made valiant defence, had he not been forbidden by Savonarola. And when, a little later, the prior was leaving most of his brethren in tears, this one would have gone with him, pressing on, though thrust back by the officers, until father Girolamo turned to him and said: "Come not, brother, for I am to die."

There is no account needed here of Fra Bartolommeo. But for him, as for these other artists, Vasari's *Lives* may be consulted agreeably. It is from Vasari that most of the quotations in this note have been made.

THE WAR OF THE COMMUNITIES IN CASTILE.



1520 – 1522.

Voz es de tus vasallos, que de serlo
Testimonio jamás dieron mas claro,
Que quando mas traydores te parecen.
Vicente Garcia de la Huerta. [La Raquel.]

Attempts to advance the cause of freedom by the sword are incalculably perilous. — *Arnold. [App. I. to Thucydides.]*

WAR OF THE COMMUNITIES IN CASTILE.

I.

CASTILE, Old and New, was the largest of the Spanish kingdoms united by the monarchy of Ferdinand and Isabella. It was the *Coro y Castilla*, the core and citadel of Spain. High mountain-ranges run their sentinel-lines through north and south, through east and west, dividing valleys of romantic beauty from wide table-lands of desolate ugliness. The soil, although covering treasures, is hardly cultivated; the country is almost abandoned by men and beasts; the towns are distant from each other, and communication is difficult and insecure. Spain's great rivers are here only narrow streams, flowing in channels of separation rather than of union. It looks like a sluggish region, where the dingy olive-tree might grow in peace; yet it is swept by winds well nigh wild enough to move the mountains themselves, withering the ground's strength, and making even

man's life tempestuous. Castile is just as it always has been, geographically, the country of a divided, a backward, and a passionate people. The unity which has actually belonged to Castilians is wholly historical, that is, wholly accidental to their broken land. The early history and character of the Castilian race have united it through all time. The language they spoke has become the only common language of Spain. Their blood is the oldest and purest in Spanish veins, and they have been the bloom of the Spanish nation, (*robur Hispaniæ.*) Their strangely compounded laws (of Roman, Gothic, Ecclesiastical, and purely Spanish elements,) have gained the mastery in Spain, and have almost forced its people to be grave and indolent. The excellence of the Castilian stock, *viejo y rancio*, ancient and rank as it is, springs from its independence of life, blossoming through centuries of confusion and bigotry and blood.

We must go back to its very origin, and watch the sowing of the seeds, although it be but a blighted harvest that we are afterwards to find in the War of the Castilian Communities in the sixteenth century.

It was so far back as the early years of the eighth century, when the cloud, arisen out of the East, "like a man's hand," was throwing broad shadows and dark all over Europe, that the storm of Saracen invasion burst upon Spain. Reft of

lands and subjects, vainly defended and hastily abandoned, the old Gothic monarchy of the Peninsula crumbled and fell. Some there were, few in number but brave in soul, who escaped beyond the northern mountains, content to bear long years of toil and peril, so that they might still have a Christian king, and still tread upon their fathers' soil. To those Gothic warriors, heart-whole in the midst of change and ruin, Spain owes all that she has now, all that she has had in other years. They were brave and free and pious men. The new-born kingdom of Oviedo, which they established amongst their mountains, grew into vigorous youth. Its people were a united and an independent people, acknowledging no other authority than that of warrior-nobles and warrior-kings. When they had armed themselves anew with strong hopes and abundant energies, they drew their swords again, and called upon their chief to lead them down upon the far-stretching plains which were still in the keeping of the stranger Moors. The course of mountain-stream,

"In strength, in speed, in fury, and in joy,"

is not swifter nor surer than the course of those mountain heroes. As far as to the Ocean on the West, and to the Ebro on the East, were borne the Christian banners, and the kingdom of Oviedo was increased to the large kingdom of Leon. Freedom found "wings on every wind" of memory and of hope. The old Spaniard's chief principle, from which he never departed in love, warfare, or de-

votion, was to maintain his personal dignity unblemished. The higher classes were cavaliers, the lower classes were foot-soldiers,—this was the great difference between them,—and, where all armed for the same cause and fought in the same fight, it was impossible that any should be slaves. A town, newly conquered from the Saracens, had need of free citizens, because its inhabitants were its only defenders. Each one of the cities chose its own magistrates, and governed its own neighborhood generally, according to forms which were descended to them from the time of the Roman dominion. The liberty, which had sprung up in the mountains of Oviedo descended upon the plains of Castile. It was not everywhere welcomed with the same loyalty of soul. It was delayed by want of spirit, and broken by want of union, but was still there, in Castile, and while it remained, there was hope unfailing. The presence of such enemies as the Saracens was the best of all helps to Spanish freedom. The kings who were most successful in warfare were most benevolent in legislation, although it must be confessed, that in this they were not more moved by kingly generosity towards a gallant people than by unkingly fear of a restless enemy, or, often, of their own boisterous nobility. But the people were safe as long as they were free, and the days of their freedom were the days of their glory.

The liberties of Castile existed not only in the Communities, or Cities, but in the Cortés, or Con-

gress of the kingdom. The Cortés was originally composed of nobles and prelates only, but as the wealth and importance of the communities increased, their deputies were also summoned to minister to the necessities of the crown, (1215). The story of the Castilian kings is a strange confusion of romantic adventure and unromantic beggary. The simple truth about the Cortés is, that the deputies of the Communities were called to it, because King Alonzo XI. was in sore strait for money, which none of his lords, state-lords or church-lords, in the Cortés, would give him. It was full half a century before anything was heard of the English commons, and such representative liberty in Castile was, of course, very feeble and very awkward. The deputies of the cities were chosen by the magistrates, and not by the people, of which the lower orders had no sort of voice or influence in the matter. Not many cities sent any deputies at all in the beginning of the sixteenth century, but at that period, nobles and priests had left the field in the Cortés clear to the citizens, who were alone represented. The pretensions of those worthy creatures, the citizens, are not to be mistaken for their powers. They could do little more than vote petitions very willingly and supplies very unwillingly to their kings.* They maintained their right to approve and even to re-

* "Te daré dinero si me das las leyes que necesita el reino." This was a sort of contract between the Cortés and the Crown.

ject the royal laws, yet, in spite of their proud declaration that "no law could be made or renewed but by the Cortés," the Castilian kings were masters of their own legislation.* On the other hand, the Cortés were always concerned in the most important interests of government, and bore themselves through trials and watches like trusty sentinels, with courage and fidelity. Their assemblings, from time to time, are good land-marks upon the expanse of Castilian history.

The earliest hostility to the steadily increasing freedom of Castile, came from the nobles. Their ambition was beyond the king's control, much before their profligacy grew to be beyond the people's endurance. The petitions of the Cortés to the crown were crowded with complaints against the nobility, who were often

"bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name."

They were the *Ricos Hombres*, the Rich Men, and Castile was long as much at their mercy as if they had bought both king and kingdom. The people were obliged to defend themselves, and, for self-protection's sake, joined together through their cities in *Hermandades* or Brotherhoods, which often resisted and sometimes revenged the cruelties

* "Donde quieren reyes, ahí van leyes," as kings like, so laws go, is, and has been, a true Spanish saying.

done to the common citizens by the nobles, much too powerful to be dealt with singly. These confederacies were wisely and warmly encouraged by the crown, and the great principle of union was gained for the people. Isabella, of still-loved memory, placed herself at the head of a Brotherhood, formed in the early part of her reign, with the object of restoring peace and prosperity to her desolate and divided kingdom. At her bidding, and by the energetic action of the Communities, the nobles were obliged to yield their claims to privileges unprincipled and uncontrolled.

The strength of aristocracy declined, and the strength of royalty increased apace. The old elements of feudality began to break asunder, and from their ruins were built up the strongholds of central, national, royal power. This was a real want of society in the fifteenth century, in a time full of vicissitudes and creations, when bold energies needed strong supports. The Dark Ages were ended in the light and hope just given to men, and the first reports of the newly invented artillery of Europe, were like salutes to the coming destinies of mankind. The grave of ancient Learning was opened, and the miracle of its resurrection begun. All the interests of every-day industry were enlarged by adventures beyond the seas. Kings upon their thrones caught the far-reaching enthusiasm, and stretched out their sceptres to mark their own lion's-shares. All they claimed, and

more, was yielded to them. Monarchy was strengthened and extended in principle, perhaps that one anchor, at least, might hold in this flood-tide of human fortunes. As it happened throughout Europe, so it happened in Spain, that royal power rose far above all other power. Ferdinand and Isabella were upon the throne, and in them their people trusted. But the Communities were restless, and began to fear that their independence was threatened with greater dangers than the old nobles had ever brought upon them. However reasonable such fears were, it was an ill-omened time for confederacies or rebellions.

The war of the Communities broke out sixteen years after Isabella's death. While she lived to govern her people and her husband Ferdinand, all was well with Spain. The devotion, which bore the Catholic standard to the Alhambra towers, was equally earnest in making the Catholic kingdom worthy of its increasing dominion. The nobles were subdued, the people were protected and the national interests were joined together in one. Spain discovered to her amazement that she had a government which her people might obey without losing pride or independence. Then (1504,) Isabella died, and left empty a throne that has never yet been filled as in her memorable reign. Ferdinand, escaped from her control, could not escape the influences she had spread about him, and, awhile, pursued the same

objects which her hopes had made holy to Spain. But he was selfish and insincere in the exercise of his power, and, not content with triumphs gained over the nobility, he began to covet the already diminished privileges of the people. Ferdinand was faithless to the great purposes of monarchy. He established its might, but he could not establish its right, by thinking that Spain was made for him and not he for Spain. The liberties of his people were in real danger from the authority of superior and arbitrary laws. Philip Second, who reigned fifty years later, once told his son that he owed all his power to Ferdinand, but the gift of such despotism did not deserve his gratitude. Ferdinand died, twelve years after Isabella, leaving the throne of Spain to their grandson Charles, (1516.) We must briefly follow the first years of his reign.

II.

Charles the First—better known to us as Charles the Fifth Emperor of Germany,—was the grandson of Austrian Maximilian, on the side of his father, Archduke Philip, that son-in-law whom Isabella could not love. In whatever Charles was unlike to his father and grandfathers, one passion he inherited from them all, the passion of absolute power. His grave and obstinate demeanor was

the outward expression of a haughty and resolute soul. With all his self-will, he possessed great and attractive accomplishments, and might easily have made himself loved, instead of making himself feared. He was a boy, only sixteen years old, when the throne of Spain fell to his inheritance, but he had been born and bred in distant Flanders, and neither spoke the language, nor felt the associations, nor comprehended the rights, which belonged to his stranger people. Cold as was its light to them, his rising star was followed by eyes, that would never have wearied of watching, and hearts, that would never have ceased from loving, had it not been hid from them at last, by fast-gathering wrongs.

So soon as Charles heard, at Brussels, of Ferdinand's death, he declared himself king, without either awaiting the proclamation of the Cortés, a right his people valued, or regarding the honor which belonged to the name, at least, of his poor mother, Joanna, whom the Castilians looked upon as their queen, the daughter of their dearly remembered Isabella.* The young king meant to make his authority clear, from the beginning, but he also made it, as he did not mean to do, usurping and suspected. He seized upon the work, begun before

* Joanna was in Tordesillas, a Castilian city, watching, as she had done for the last ten years, by the coffin of her handsome husband, the Archduke Philip. He had never loved her, but she worshipped him, and his death bereft her of her senses.

him, of tearing down all other images than those of his own royalty. Ferdinand had appointed Cardinal Ximenes, already called a third sovereign [*tertius rex*,] to the regency of Spain. Him Charles acknowledged, but in association with a regent of his own appointment, Cardinal Adrian of Utrecht, who had been a very good preceptor to the young prince, but who proved an utterly incapable minister to the young king. Ximenes claimed and exercised superior authority. His regency was successful in strengthening the outward supports of his master's throne, but his imperious commands kindled many heart-burnings in Castile, and Spain was, throughout, a troubled country, when the stranger-king landed upon its shores. The Castilians were not a people to be trifled with, even by Cardinal Ximenes. The old passion for independence was fresh yet in their souls. What the Community of Valladolid wrote to Charles when he was still in Brussels, was what all Spain would have repeated: "We recall to your remembrance the noble things which belong to your kingdom, — the grandees who shall bear your orders, — the people full of spirit and valor, — the land so strong and so abundant, that while all have need of it, it hath need of none, — and how, while other nations supplied Rome with food, Spain gave her Emperors."

Charles was impatient to take possession of this strong and abundant land, and soon sailed away

from Flanders. On the 13th of September, 1517, the year after Ferdinand's death, the young king of Castile and of Leon landed at Villaviciosa, on the northern coast of his kingdom, amid acclamations warm from the lips, at least, of his subjects, who had looked for him "with open arms and beating hearts." The Castilians had "no other desire," says Peter Martyr, "than to obey its King, if its King would but rightly govern them. . . . Yet even the laziest horses," he continues, "if vexed with spurs, will turn their heels against their master, and I know not the people to whom the like would happen sooner than to the Spaniards."* His first act was to break the heart of his and his father's faithful servant Ximenes, by refusing to see him. His next was to send away his own brother, the Infant Ferdinand, to the German court of his grandfather Maximilian. Ferdinand was the idol of the people among whom he had been born and educated. It was

* Peter Martyr, *Opus Epistolarium*. Ep. 567, 568. The prediction (written in May, 1516,) is remarkable: "Audita Principis natura, diligitur, observatur, desideratur ore aperto. Legum perversio amorem solet in odium convertere. Veniat avita secuturus vestigia et felices gustabit successus: si diverterit, Hispanorum animos elatos, licet nunc, ob partam et longo tempore a Catholicis ejus maternis avis nutritam pacem, dormiant, expergefaiet in aliquem errorem, quod Deus avertat." *Ib.* Ep. 568. Peter Martyr was not only a shrewd but generally a disinterested observer of things in Spain. His account of events in the war of 1520-1522 is against the Commoners, but he had basked too long in the sunshine of the Spanish court, to be much inclined to favor any sort of popular sedition.

something more than boyish jealousy which induced his brother to dismiss him from the kingdom, and yet it was well for Ferdinand that he escaped the temptation of taking part in the near-approaching war. But the rejection of the old minister and the exile of the young prince were evil omens to Spain. Others followed with the fast-succeeding difficulties that came between the people and their king.

More than anything else Charles needed revenues, not only for himself but for the Flemings, who came with him in greedy swarms, preying upon the Spaniards, it was said, as the Spaniards preyed upon the Indians of America. Within the first year of their appearance in Spain, besides all they devoured at once, they sent home to consume at more leisure the positive sum of eleven hundred thousand ducats, or nearly ten millions of our dollars.* Foremost among them all, was Guillaume de Croy, the lord of Chièvres, who had been the king's governor in Flanders, and was now his chief minister in Spain. This man, threescore years old, digested gold, the Spaniards said, as rapidly as an ostrich makes way with iron. He was called the "bottomless abyss," the "steersman whom no pay could satisfy," and was

* Peter Martyr's lamentations are always quaint: "Quo magis illis guttura replet, eo latius ipsi guttura pandunt." (*Ep.* 631.) Or: "Glacialis Oceani accolæ ditabuntur, vestra expilabitur Castella." (*Ep.* 606.)

everywhere the object of most especial hatred, not only because he was filling himself with plunder, but more because he offended the pride of a loyal people by governing their own king.* One of Charles's most devout historians, Sandoval, acknowledges that the king began to be abhorred and even to be regarded as wanting understanding, so darkly was he seen through crowds of stranger courtiers. All the highest offices of church and state were flung at the feet of Flemings, and those they would not stoop to take, were not given, but sold to native Spaniards. "And they begin to murmur," writes one of the old chroniclers, "saying that the king no longer signs and the council no longer decides anything,—that bishops leave their sees and secretaries plunder their offices,—that magistrates take bribes, nobles run to riot, and women forget their virtues." Words, direct as these, shape themselves into a sad picture of evil times. The hatred against the strangers was really a principal cause of the war which followed close upon their departure from Spain. They had snatched, "these Flemish gluttons," they had "snatched Spanish bread from Spanish jaws," and had treated Spaniards themselves, as though "these last had been born in their sewers." No wonder, then, that such as

* "Don Carlos es Rey segun derecho, y Monsieur de Xevres de hecho," (Sandoval); Charles was king by right, but Chièvres was king in deed. "Regitur, non regit," says Peter Martyr.

the Castilians were tormented by such as the Flemings.

The Cortés, which were held, both in Castile and Aragon, to acknowledge Charles's succession to the crown, made some vain efforts to preserve the loyalty and the peace of his kingdoms.* But Charles was already in full pursuit of the imperial crown of Germany, in whose comparison the crown of Spain seemed but a bauble. He won his election, and welcomed its news with magnificent festivals at Barcelona. It brought no joy to Spain that her king had become the Emperor of Germany, and when this king or emperor asked the Spanish people for fresh supplies of money to pay for a journey and a coronation with which they had no concern, they lost their patience and determined to yield no more.

Toledo, once the capital of the Goths, and, long afterwards, the capital of Spain, deserved the name, which king Alonzo gave it, of Imperial. It was a great and noble city, numbering nearly two hundred thousand inhabitants at the period of the Commons' War. Built upon seven hills, or rather seven rocks, it stood high above the country round, "the crown of Spain." Within its walls lived nobles, priests and citizens, proud of their

* One phrase, that the Castilians introduced into their petition, is to be recorded : "*Acuerdese V. M. que un Rey es mercenario de sus subditos ;*" your Majesty must remember, that a king is in the pay of his subjects.

home and their distinction as Toledans. The great cathedral, a city in itself, believed to have been built to the Virgin, while she was yet alive, and to be still the scene of her earthly visitings, belonged to the Toledan archbishopric, the see which Cardinal Ximenes had possessed, the richest see in the Catholic world. In church and in state, Toledo was preëminent among Spanish cities, and from out her community came the first outbreak of rebellion against the evil government of King Charles. An embassy of Toledan citizens was sent to meet Charles at Barcelona. He gave them audience, and listened with unwonted graciousness to a bold and tedious harangue from one of the Deputies, Don Gonzalo Gaetan, but made no other reply than by repeating fair promises which had already been given, and already broken, to his people. Gonzalo Gaetan's return to Toledo, with no better account of his mission, was followed by strange commotions. The city-councillors drew their daggers against each other, and the citizens were all divided among themselves, according to their submission or their independence. Toledo appealed to her sister communities, that "they must beseech his Majesty to remain with them in Spain." Neither then, nor in the troubled times which followed, would the Castilians, generally, renounce their allegiance to their sovereign. The war they made was against his ministers, and not against him, against the

errors of his authority, and not against his authority itself. Even Sandoval, royal historian, allows that what they did, was mostly done "with much respect to the king and in the fear of God."

Charles went from Barcelona to Valladolid, the chief city of Leon, at that time the court residence of the Spanish sovereigns, and, through its great university, the source of jurisprudence to all Spain. The king asked supplies of the city magistrates, but they were almost flatly refused. Not concealing his displeasure, he prepared his departure from so vexatious a city, and was setting out on his way towards the north, when suddenly the great bell rang, and six thousand of the citizens assembled in arms to keep their king amongst them. They would have slain Chièvres, perhaps, and his Flemings before Charles's very eyes; but king and courtiers took to horse, forced their way through the gates, and rode, in a dark and rainy night, to Tordesillas. The next day but one, they pushed on to Santiago, in Galicia, where the Cortés were summoned to meet the king and fill a full measure of ducats for his voyage to Germany.

There is an old Spanish proverb that to provoke the weary or the hungry is to provoke Barabbas. The Castilians were both weary and hungry, and it had been wiser for their king to let them alone. If money were positively wanted,

the place to ask for it was surely Castile itself, and not a city of Galicia, which appeared to Castilians as remote as though it were a city of Germany. But Charles seemed bent on throwing stones into troubled waters, and watching the swell of wrath and danger. Every fresh demand aroused some new spirit of strife. The people were growing bolder and more turbulent. Even the Spanish clergy began to be seditious, and denied the king a subsidy which had been granted him by Pope Leo. Still Charles looked upon his own power as irresistible. He was not only King of Spain and Emperor of Germany, but all the south of Italy, all the large territories of his Austrian House, and all the vast empires, which Cortés and Balboa* were opening to him in the New World ; all these were his, and he could not fear the single insurrection of Castile. Insurrection was unnatural to the character of his age. The Commons' War never became a national enterprise, and other seditions springing from narrow sources, at the same time, in Valencia and Aragon, were never even joined to those in Castile. The thirst of Spaniards for adventure or for war might have been slaked in many another country than Spain, and they began too soon to waste each other's blood at home.

* Pizarro's great enterprise was not yet begun.

III.

“ From east to west
A groan of accusation pierces Heaven,” —

and we must give some heed to voices which rise above common murmurs. Hernando de Avalos, one of Toledo's principal magistrates, was also one of her most active defenders. Born of honorable lineage and now well-advanced in years, he was among the earliest to embrace and among the last to abandon the cause of the Communities. He was a passionate, but a steadfast Commoner. Pedro Laso de la Vega, son to one of the great state-officers of Leon, is described by the loyal chroniclers of the time, as the most capable person among those who took the people's part in this bitter war. He was braver in its beginning than at its end, and, in spite of his high birth, was far from being high-minded. A stouter champion than he, was Antonio de Acuña, Bishop of Zamora. This “seditious prelate,” as his enemies were wont to call him, who, many years before, had kept possession of his diocese against King Ferdinand's orders, now came forth in his old age, to fight at the side of the Commoners. He was restless and ambitious, but his zeal seems to have been sincere, and he sometimes used his

influence for mercy's as well as for honor's sake.* His house became the resort of all the popular leaders, and it was his own servant's story that, "none there thought of praying, but all were learning the use of their new weapons." Bishop Antonio armed and commanded a regiment of four hundred priests, whom he was fond of exhorting to fight bravely, or, if worst came to the worst, to die resolutely in "so just an enterprise." The bishop, as they said at the time, was "more of a Roland than a priest," yet he did not, we will hope, always forget the milder duties of a Christian service. Among all the Commoner chiefs, the first in rank was Pedro de Giron, a son of the great Count de Ureña.† But the part he took in the war was for "passion, not patriotism," and full is the measure of his shame. The names of truer Commoners than he have been branded with hissing-hot pens, while his has been spared. Antonio de Guevara, one of Charles the Fifth's counsellors, confesses that "in all this world's histories, they who obey the king are accounted loyal, and they who rebel are always set down

* It is very hard for us to understand this Bishop of Zamora. All sorts of abusive epithets,—seditiosus, rabidus, tumultuarius, ebulliens,—are thrown upon him, but there is no graver charge proved against him than his bearing arms, which was not then an uncommon thing for a bishop to do.

† A name one will often meet in the History of Ferdinand and Isabella.

for traitors." The Commoners have been denied credit for the simplest feelings that bind men to their country, but the testimonies against them are very far from being sure. "And thus the world goes," said Napoleon at St. Helena, "mob, robbers, rebels or heroes, according to the chances of the strife. Poor humanity !" And poor Commoners ! fallen, and trampled upon ! There is no historian among themselves to tell the story we would read more truly than it has yet been told. Nevertheless, we will now confide in the sincerity, with which Toledo wrote to her sister cities, that "in such a cause as theirs, danger is safety, exile is glory, loss is gain, persecution is reward, death is life, and these, being heroic deeds, can only be attempted by lofty hearts."

One "lofty heart" there was in Toledo itself, that we would believe, in defiance of all the chroniclers that ever wrote of Spain. It would be shameful to doubt it, to doubt the sincerity of Juan de Padilla, the hero-spirit of the Commoners. He was the son of the Grand Seneschal of Castile, and but thirty years old, when these quarrels began between his country and his sovereign. All his family adhered to royalty, all save his wife, a daughter of the Count de Tendilla, a woman of noble birth and noble mind. Padilla, sharing the zeal of Hernando de Avalos, obeyed the generous impulses which bade him side with the weakest and the wronged, "a noble youth," says Peter

Martyr, "yet the author of all those seditions."

"And as a lover hails the dawn
Of a first smile, so welcomed he
The sparkle of the first sword drawn
For vengeance and for liberty."

Padilla possessed every charm, both of person and accomplishment, to win the admiration and attachment of a passionate people. High-born and graceful, brave and generous, enthusiastic and gentle, he became the idol [numen suum] of his brethren in arms. He was self-forgetful in purpose and unshrinking in heart, yet he had little of that inner fire which shines like light over dark waters, and the devotion he gave without measure to his countrymen, was vain to them and to him. We shall have reason to know how long he was the hope of the cause, which he warmly espoused in its spring, and to which he fearlessly pledged his faith by death. It is a delight to repeat the name of such an one as Juan de Padilla; not that he was impetuous and valiant, as many men claim to be, but that he was honorable, faithful, and self-denying, as few men in his place could have been. We look back to him in his youth's prime and his soul's excellence, grateful that we know them at least in part, grateful that we can do him some honor, without passion and without fear.

Yet it is here that we would an instant linger in reasonable sorrow for the errors, after which the Commons seem to have been self-destroyed.

Why were such brave spirits broken, such high hopes crushed, such honest liberties overthrown? And the simple answer comes from our own hearts as well as from Spanish histories, that the great cause was but unworthily upheld, and that its great claims would have prevailed in resolute peace far better and far sooner than in turbulent war.*

IV.

Returning to the events, which immediately preceded the outbreak of war, we find Don Pedro Laso de la Vega and other commissioners from Toledo admitted to reason with the king, then on his way to meet the Cortés at Santiago. Don Pedro claimed what all Spain most desired, that the king's departure should be at least delayed, and that, if Castile must be deserted by her sove-

* Peter Martyr, whose judgments or whose prejudices were quite against the commoners, writes with reason: "Sonus quidem primarius horum motuum sanus, ut leges Regni serventur indemnes: sed meo judicio aberratur in processu. Supplicatu," he adds, "non armis agendum esse crederem satius." (*Epist.* 701.) He writes, again, to the Chancellor, with Charles: "Mi magne cancellarie, ut verum fateamur, si ablata passione turbante rationem, pensitaverimus rem, non longe a justo vagatur in suis postulatis misera Castilla. Sed quid? . . . facile est vaticinatu, seditiones has cito ruituras, quia et consilio et ducibus carent."—(*Epist.* 636.)

reign, some share in his government should be given to her communities. Old Pedro's earnestness moved some of the bystanders to tears, but the only return it had from Charles, was his telling them, "with countenance somewhat black and severe," that, "if it were not remembered whose sons they were, they should be most grievously chastised, even as his royal council had recommended." Not even yet despairing, Don Pedro and his companions followed the king to Santiago, where the Cortés, last hope to them and to their countrymen, was soon after opened, (April 1st, 1520.) Charles was present among the Deputies, whom he was already prepared to find noisy and seditious men. In his name, the President of the Cortés pronounced a lengthy discourse upon the necessities of the king and the duties of the deputies. It was heard in patient silence, and things were following in usual course, when some deputies from Salamanca declared that they would never even make the common oath of fealty to the crown, until justice was done to their rightful demands. Their words fell like sparks upon passionate hearts. Pedro Laso, who was present, although he was not a properly chosen deputy, took fire, and cried out, that he would be faithful to his countrymen : "Rather would I lose my head than do injury to the city or to the kingdom." Many others followed these bold examples, and for three or four days there was nothing but confusion

in the Cortés. It was easy for Charles to banish froward deputies, and to obtain from more submissive ones the moneys he required; but every act of absolute authority was like opening a new flame from ashes ready to blaze.

The first insurrection was in Toledo, where the rumor was presently spread that its petitions had been despised and its deputies disgraced. The people were bitterly enraged, the nobles were indignant, and even the priests joined in a religious procession, parading the streets and chanting the prayer of the Catholic litany for the illumination of the king's understanding. Eminent above all others there in words and deeds were Hernando de Avalos and Juan de Padilla; and it was not long before an order came from the king, summoning Padilla and some other cavaliers to his presence at Santiago. But the citizens would not yet part with their best helpers, and all Toledo began to "roar like a wounded bull." Six thousand men took arms, and with loud cries of "Death to the Flemings! . . . Long live Padilla," seized upon the cavaliers named in the king's summons, and forced them, not unwilling, to swear that they would not desert the people who loved them, for a master who hated them. The crowd, increased to twenty thousand, pressed on to the house of the royal governor, whom they found quite ready to save himself by submission, and then turned against the Alcazar, or citadel,

which was forced, in spite of resistance from some Toledan cavaliers, who liked the citizens less than the king. Just at the moment of triumph, it was heard that Pedro Laso was near Toledo, on his way back from the Cortés, out of which Charles had dismissed him. The whole people went forth to meet the deputy who had borne himself nobly in their name, and conducted him with great rejoicing to his home. A day or two after, the royal governor was driven out from the city. New magistrates were chosen in the name of "the King and the Community;" the red banners of Toledo were hung upon her towers; the walls were kept guarded; and within, the citizens awaited the storm, which was sure, they thought, to break upon them, from Santiago.

The Cortés were already removed to Corunna, on the coast, as if Charles's impatience to be gone were increased by the growing seditions among his Castilian subjects. Once, he resolved to return himself, to Toledo, but his Flemish courtiers, gorged with plunder, and longing to put it and themselves in safety, persuaded their master to hasten, instead of delaying departure. The Cortés granted some supplies in great confusion and with great reluctance, joining to their "Free Gift," as they chose to call it, a noble petition in the name of all Castile, to which their king, however, was little likely to yield. The last thing Charles saw fit to do was, to provoke even his nobility by ap-

pointing to the Regency of Castile, poor old Cardinal Adrian, a good man, but a stranger, and one who could never bear his dignities with credit or even serenity. As confusion increased, Charles became eager to depart with the Flemings, just as though Spain "had been Tartarus and they were all bound at once to Elysium." At last, on the twentieth day of May, the king embarked "with great music and rejoicing" for Flanders, leaving Isabella's kingdom, says the historian, "weighed down by griefs and misfortunes."* Her children rose to sustain her in this time of her desertion, but they fell too soon, crushed to earth with the country they could not save.

One by one the Castilian Communities rebelled against their absent sovereign. To some of them the last drop in an overflowing cup was the return of their deputies, whose grant of moneys to Charles was held for arrant treachery. Tumults broke out everywhere; effigies of unfaithful deputies were burned; royal governors were expelled; new magistrates were chosen; city-fortifications were seized by the people; old liberties were restored and new were created. The lowest classes were guilty of some great excesses, such as always happen when the mass of any people finds itself

* "Tam optati a Belgis quam ab Hispanis deplorati, exorti venti Cæsarea vela tetenderunt . . . Mæstas vidi Castellorum omnium vultus, qui miseram Hispaniam cernunt versam in provinciam, ab Oceano glaciale gubernandam."—*Peter Martyr, Ep.* 670.

too suddenly possessed of power. The chiefs of the Commoners, almost universally chosen from among the popular Cavaliers, were unwearied in works of humanity and compassion. However black were the different rebellions, the royal banners waved over even darker scenes in those fearful days. It is scarcely worth while to seek out stains upon the pages of contemporary chronicles or letters, whose testimony is, of course, almost entirely against the fallen Commoners. But through all the war there is recorded no cruelty more cold-blooded, than the burning, by royal troops, of three thousand, some say five thousand persons, men, women, and children, in the Cathedral of Mora, destroyed with the very shrines at which they had sought safety. The better Cavaliers, as well as the better Commoners, would have restored peace, even at their own peril. At the worst, the brief revenge of the populace was far less wicked than the long injuries they had borne in other times; "a sword in a madman's hands"* is not often so dangerous as a tyrant's axe. Yet it was a fatal boldness in the Communities to have set themselves against such power as Charles held above them. Their common cries, "Long life to the king!" "Death to the bad Councillors!" were signs of sedition that might have been easily satisfied. The struggles into which the Commoners

* So Peter Martyr wrote: "Est gladius in manu furentis populo potestatem præbere."—*Epist.* 636.

plunged, were for ancient rights and against recent wrongs, but the strife was unequal and its issue sure. The weakest were the soonest wasted, and numbers, bravery, and generosity were spent in vain. Each rising in Castile sprang from common oppression; each followed the same periods of popular triumphs; and it is only by gathering all together, that we can count the store which was expended.

While the people were rising in Madrid, then an obscure and ill-favored city, its Alcalde de Vargas, a faithful servant to the king, took refuge, with such followers as he could collect, in the Alcazar, or Castle of the town. Being soon hard pressed by the newly armed citizens, he went out alone by night to seek assistance at Alcalà, distant some sixteen miles. There he found forty men to follow him back, but when already near the Madrid gates, they were attacked by a large number of citizens, who, by some accident, had been alarmed, and who were waiting for any enemies that might be approaching the city. Forty men could do nothing against hundreds, and even de Vargas was forced to set the example and save his men by swiftest flight back to Alcalà. But the Madrid Alcazar was not yet surrendered. The place which de Vargas unwillingly left, was taken by his wife, Doña Agnes, who made it known through Madrid, that, where she was, there the king's authority should be preserved. The citi-

zens defied her and pressed on ; the soldiers within cheered her and kept their post ; a company of royal troops came near to succor her, but was driven back by some Toledan Commoners ; yet still Doña Agnes, with more than womanly fortitude, maintained the Alcazar against attacks by day and night, nor yielded it, until the best among her men were slain, and the few who remained were utterly exhausted. The Commoners took it into their possession with great rejoicing, yet not, it is to be hoped, without honorable regard for the brave woman who had kept it well against them.

Meanwhile, Cardinal Adrian, the Regent, was at Valladolid, in a sad state of perplexity. He would have bent beneath the weight of his own authority in more tranquil times, and all the strength of the Royal Council was now necessary to sustain him. At the head of the Council, was the Archbishop of Granada, a passionate old man, who was much enraged by the insurrections about him, and asked for measures of merciless severity against the Commoners. His voice prevailed with confused and weak-minded colleagues. Without making one human effort to stay the passions of cruelly abused men, it was at once resolved to lash and chain them to rest. The city of Segovia had been one of the earliest in rebellion, and one of its deputies to the Cortés was even slain by the populace on his return. Segovia was now to be first

subdued, according to the Council. An Alcalde Ronquillo, whose rough-shod judgments had already left evil traces throughout Castile, was sent with one thousand men-at-arms to crush Segovia to dust; a harsh and choleric man, worthy to begin the counterwork of oppression.

Segovia was proud among the proudest cities of Castile. Its history was traced back to the Roman dominion, when the Emperor Trojan had built an aqueduct for its people, and its modern boast was that Isabella had there been first proclaimed queen of Castile. When Alcalde Ronquillo marched against it, there may have been 30,000 inhabitants within its walls, and half of these, at least, would rather have died than have seen their homes destroyed and their rights abandoned. Ronquillo came, as the people said, an executioner rather than a judge, "not with pointed pens to write in ink, but with sharp lances to draw blood." A petition for more charitable treatment was hurriedly sent to Cardinal Adrian, but without trusting to his clemency, the Segovians took their arms and joined them, under the command of Juan Bravo, a brave Commoner and true. Ronquillo advanced to a town within fifteen miles of Segovia, where he established his quarters, yet prevented, by the scantiness of his numbers, to do anything more than make proclamations against the rebels, and prove his sincerity by hanging or torturing the few prisoners who fell into his power. Afterwards,

when his troops were increased, he began to attempt more effective measures. But the cities of Castile, which had rebelled like Segovia, and which might be next attacked, when that had fallen, determined to save their neighbor and their ally. Juan de Padilla, earliest in the field, brought five hundred men from Toledo, and as many more were sent by other near Communities. Padilla's first trial of strength was successful, and Alcalde Ronquillo was compelled to retreat from the position he had kept for nearly a month past. The only result of his expedition was to hasten the civil war, and give confidence to the Commoners.

On the twenty-ninth of July, while the royal troops were close upon Segovia, a number of deputies from Toledo, Salamanca, Avila, Toro, Zamora and Leon, met together in the Cathedral chapter of Avila, a town forty or fifty miles from Madrid, and gave to their assembly the name of *La Santa Junta de Avila*, the Holy Council of Avila. Toledo had demanded, again and again, the institution of some such confederacy among her sister Communities, and one of her wisest advisers, Pedro Laso de la Vega, was now chosen President of the Avila Council. Upon the Christian cross, the deputies swore to have "no other ends than the king's service and the people's favor," an honest oath and one they would have kept, "not as rebels, but as saviors of their

country.” Other deputies came, afterwards, from Madrid, Guadalaxara, Soria, Murcia, Cuenca, Segovia, Valladolid, Burgos, and Ciudad Real. These were all the cities entitled to a voice in the Castilian Cortés, excepting those of Andalusia. The remote position and the unsettled population of this southern province kept back its sympathy from Castile. Seville, far the most national of all the Andalusian cities, was overawed by the power of the great Medina-Sidonias. At a later period, a Council was formed in the south, under the name of *La Junta de la Rambla*, which deliberately offered to the king its assistance in subduing the Holy Council of Avila, then in full vigor of authority. The first measures of the Avila Council were wise and brave. Without yielding their liberties, they would have avoided the necessity of perilling them in uncertain war. They bound their Communities in close union, and then looked after their enemies. The Cardinal Adrian, all the while ordering the deputies to separate, was become so contemptibly helpless, that they were provoked to make the attempt, at last, to disembararrass themselves and their country of his woful Regency.

We left Alcalde de Ronquillo retreating from Segovia, before Juan de Padilla. He was soon joined, and superseded in his command, by Antonio de Fonseca, the Captain-General of Castile. Some artillery, of which the royal troops were much in need, was stored at Medina del Campo, a town

half-way between Valladolid and Segovia. At the end of August, Fonseca directed his march to this place, intending, after providing himself with artillery, to attack Segovia a second time. The Segovians, taking alarm, wrote to the citizens of Medina, beseeching them to refuse delivery of the artillery. Medina was already resolved to defend herself. In vain the Captain-General summoned the people to surrender the royal stores: in vain his men advanced against the town; the very cannon they sought were turned against them, and every citizen fought as a trained soldier. Then, in the hot confusion of the battle, Fonseca ordered the town to be set on fire, believing, probably, that the towns-people would care more for saving their own homes than for keeping the king's artillery. It must have been a dismal fight; but the men of Medina were not dismayed, looking back upon their burning houses, says the chronicler, "as though they had belonged to the enemy." So Fonseca was repulsed with the double shame of defeat and cruelty. Medina lay in blackened ruins; its churches, monasteries and houses,—nine hundred, some said,—all were fallen. Scarcely a place of common shelter could be found, and even the church-services were necessarily performed in the open air. Wealth, comfort, and subsistence were gone; horrible deeds had been done by the king's soldiers; and, as the citizens wrote, "what they had suffered they had hearts

to endure, but no tongues to tell." Then, "burning with rage as their houses had burned with fire," they set up a mob-government, under a weaver named Bobadilla, and, giving loose to their worst passions, fell madly upon some of their old magistrates, whom they charged, truly or falsely, with treachery. The measure of Medina's desolation was full.

Segovia, herself saved by the courage of this desolate city, hastily sent the first words of gratitude and sympathy. "Be sure," wrote her magistrates, "be sure that, rather than have you lose so much, we would have lost our lives; but since Medina hath been destroyed for Segovia's sake, Segovia will revenge Medina's ruin. . . And from this time remember that all of us do pledge for each one of you our fortunes and our lives." Padilla was already on the way with troops from Toledo, Madrid, and Segovia, to save Medina. He came too late, and was met by the people bearing black flags before them. Such assistance as they still needed, was cheerfully given, and in a few days something was done to repair the calamities from which Medina never entirely recovered. The forces under Padilla's command were daily increasing. The flames of the burning city had glared like signal fires of insurrection, over all Castile. The royal troops were retreating and separating in disgrace. It was a time for the Commoners to use their freshest vigor, and Pa-

dilla was not a leader to hesitate, when there were any energies to sustain his own.

Fifteen miles from Medina, at Tordesillas, lived poor Queen Joanna, Isabella's daughter, and mother to King Charles, with no other companion than her husband Philip's coffin, and no other guardians than the Marquis and Marchioness de Denia. The king's party, or the Cavaliers, said she was mad; the Commoners declared her to be in perfect possession of her senses, and imprisoned against her will. Padilla looked to the queen, whether she were sane or insane, as one he surely honored for her mother's sake. He felt how much the cause of the Communities was in need of some overshadowing name, and that Joanna's might well be set up against the king's. Padilla contrived to inform her of his approach, and then, without further delay, left Medina, appearing before Tordesillas on the second of September. At the queen's command, he was welcomed by the towns-people, and Joanna herself received him, as a deliverer and a trusted friend. The young chief stood before the solitary queen and told her the strange story of Charles's absence, and of the evils he had left behind him in Castile. "I am come," said Padilla, "to Tordesillas, in your Highness' defence, and it is to your command and to my service, that Castilians look now for mercy and deliverance." "Go then, as my Captain-General," replied Joanna, "to prepare all

necessary things, and I will take care of you and of my people." In this, and in other later interviews, to which Padilla and the Deputies of the Avila Council were admitted, Joanna bore herself wisely and royally.* At her summons, the Council removed its sessions from Avila to Tordesillas. The Communities sent troops to guard the queen and protect the council. All the Commoner chiefs hastened to give their homage to Joanna, whose presence among them did honor and service to their cause. Tordesillas could scarcely contain this multitude of strangers.

The king's Council of Regency had been established at Valladolid, in confidence of that ancient city's loyalty. But, when tidings were brought to it from fallen Medina, the great bell was rung, and an armed crowd collected in the great square of the city. A fearful night, black with "that fury, which," according to our chronicler, "the devil sowed in Spain," was spent in Valladolid. Captain-General Fonseca's house was pulled to the ground, and wild deeds, that we love not to read, were done. In the morning a new government was formed under magistrates taken from among the Cavaliers. Poor Cardinal Adrian and his councillors trembled for their lives. Even the

* It was once said to her that the king had done great injury to the kingdom, and she answered, with striking expression, that it was Castile's fault if it had suffered harm from her son, who was but a boy.

fierce old Archbishop of Granada, President of the Council, confessed that he knew not how to oppose such fury as possessed the people. The Cardinal was for yielding, and began by consenting to disband the army, then in retreat from Medina. Fonseca and Ronquillo only saved themselves by taking to horse and escaping to Portugal, from which they soon sailed to Flanders. Just after the Valladolid tumults were quieted, came a Dominican friar with troops and letters from the Council at Tordesillas, demanding the removal of the Regent's Council to the same city. This was rather too much to bear, but Padilla's arrival, at the head of twelve hundred men, settled the question. Some of the councillors escaped; the others, with the great seal of Castile, were conducted by Padilla to Tordesillas. Good Cardinal Adrian was left behind in utter despair. He was for "giving up the ship to the storm," says the historian, but not, we may believe, without setting himself in safety by escaping from Valladolid. The people watched him closely, and, when he went out one morning towards the gates, they rang their great bell, and swarmed about him "like ants." Pedro Giron, already high in influence with the citizens, succeeded in saving the king's Regent from any greater dishonor than that of being obliged to make his way back, in the midst of armed men, with drums beating and trumpets blowing in his ears. But the Cardinal

was desperate; he would abide no longer among this bell-ringing and trumpet-blowing people, and soon stole away, alone and in disguise, going with all speed to join the Admiral of Castile, who was in arms, sixteen miles off, at Rio Seco.

It was scarcely a day more than six months from the opening of the Cortés, in Santiago, and the Castilian Communities, then everywhere oppressed, were now everywhere triumphant. Their Council and their favorite general Padilla were in high favor with Queen Joanna. Nobles and priests and citizens were in arms for the sake of liberties once lost but found again. Their enemies were separated, the Royal Council was dissolved, and the Regent, himself, was a fugitive. The waves, chained and beaten in the king's name, were rolling over his broken authority, throughout the best part of Spain. If there were any government afloat, it was that of Tordesillas, "in the names of the Queen, the King, and the Holy Council."

King Charles, still in Brussels, had heard of the first revolts against his authority, through some Flemings, lately returned from Spain. The strange story they brought, was confirmed by despatches from the Cardinal Regent, relating "what might seem a fable to have happened in so noble a kingdom and in so short a time," and confessing that "the royal officers were no longer ministers of justice, but victims of the people's wrath, being

in nowise powerful." The picture which these despatches give of the Council's imbecility is amusing: "If we wish to cut this evil short by judgment, we are not obeyed; if by peaceable entreaty, we are not trusted; if by force, we have neither men nor money in our service." There was little more wisdom in the Brussels Court than in the Valladolid Council. The Spanish courtiers were enraged against the Flemings that they had provoked Castile to rebellion. The Flemings abused the Spaniards for belonging to a nation which had risen against its king. Chief-minister Chièvres had no resolution to help his embarrassed sovereign; and Charles called a Council, which was taken up with too many prejudices and too many desires to do him any service. Germans would persuade their Emperor to go on to Germany; Italians implored his countenance in Italy; Aragonese claimed his aid in subduing the seditions at Valencia; Castilians declared that without him all was lost in Spain; and even Flemings put in a word for themselves, recommending the tranquillity and attachment of their own provinces. While each was speaking for himself, Charles was quite unable to act for all. He was himself most impatient to take possession of his German Empire, and to Germany he resolved to travel on. Castile he thought to appease by letters from his own hand, commanding her to obedience, and promising his early return. He

even renounced the "Free Gift" of the Santiago Cortés, and declared that Castilians alone should henceforth be promoted to the dignities of the kingdom. Partly in earnest of his better purposes, partly to lighten the load under which Cardinal Adrian was fast sinking, but still more to secure the wavering devotion of the Castilian nobility, Charles now appointed his Admiral, Fadrique Enriquez, and his Constable, Íñigo Velasco, both "cavaliers of ancient and generous blood," to be the Cardinal's colleagues in the Regency. A better blow than this, in defence of his royal authority, could not have been struck. The nobles of Castile at once gathered round the new Regents, proud in fidelity to honorable and national names. The king often acknowledged that he owed his crown to the good services of the Constable in Castile. From the day of his appointment, and the Admiral's, to authority, the course of the war was changed.

The king's grace was shown too late to save his people. Royal promises, which, six months before, would have been signs of great things to Castile, now seemed nothing more than the first fruits of insurrection, forced from a hard master. The Commoners were rather encouraged in rebellion, than brought back to obedience, by the Brussels letters. In the name of the Holy Council, a long and bold reply was sent to Charles, now crowned Emperor of Germany. "The laws of

these your kingdoms" — thus the letter ran — "the laws of these your kingdoms, most sovereign prince, say and order among other things that the King do nothing against his own honor and the commonweal.* Of the evil government which hath been over us, and of the losses and exorbitancies, which have been brought upon us, we believe your Councillors to be especially guilty. Therefore, doing what it was right to do according to the laws of your kingdoms, we have removed from your Council those who worked the miseries of which we write at length. We would do as much by those other Councillors, now with your Majesty, were they but here, since their misdoings have been the same. . . But we rather beseech your Majesty, for our relief and good government, to confirm the chapters which we send herewith; and for what we have done in your royal service and in the interest of your kingdoms, we entreat your Majesty to esteem it well and reverently done." In all this, be it observed, there is the mingling of loyalty and liberty, peculiar to the Castilian character.

The Chapters, (*Capitulos*,) which this letter accompanied as herald, were no less than one

* Compare one of the Visigoth laws : " Sane tam de præsentī quam de futuris regibus hanc sententiā promulgamus, ut si quis ex eis, contra reverentiā legum, superba dominatione et fastu regio, in flagitiis et facinore, sive cupiditate, crudelissimā potestatem in populis exercuerit, anathematis sententiā, etc."

hundred and eighteen in number. Lengthy though they be, we have much to seek in them, for they are the only monuments, which have been allowed to bear good inscriptions for the Commoners. The words upon them are so brave, the hopes beneath them were so fair, that we would linger to read and know them for ourselves. The Chapters begin with a mournful history of the miseries by which Castile had been driven into rebellion, and to this there followed the demands of the Commoners. They asked, in the first place, that the king would return to govern them as they desired. They claimed his pardon for any evil courses, into which they might have fallen, and his encouragement of the manly purposes they had more generally pursued. They directly intimated, that, if the sources of sedition were to be closed by their submission, it was necessary that the sources of oppression should be also closed by limits set about the king's power. The great point on which the Council insisted with Charles was the suppression of all unjust privileges, hitherto recognized by the Castilian sovereigns, so "that all should contribute, all be taxed, and all be equal in Castile." * This claim to equality before the laws is like a cross set upon the citadel, by which the Commoners would have protected their liberty; alas! that it was built in air, a very *Château en Espagne*.

* "Que en Castilla todos contribuyesen, todos fuesen iguales y todos pechasen."

All other demands were subordinate; that justice should be sheltered beneath larger laws, and be administered by more righteous judges; that the offices of state should no more be sold or thrown to strangers, but given, as of right, to native Castilians; that industry should be protected, currency controlled, and taxation regulated anew; that even the power of the Church should be limited, and its prelates be forced to live in Christian intercourse with their people; and that, "to observe the security of these laws and privileges," the Cortés, composed of free-chosen deputies, should be assembled every three years. All the branches of government, in church and state, were to be thus trained and tended, that the desolation of those weary years might never return to Castile. So be the Commoners known and upheld. Had such claims as these prevailed in peace, their kingdom might have become, even as they prayed, "the richest and most blessed of the earth."

But the hopes of the Castilians were premature. At the same period, when these Chapters were sent to Charles Fifth, the English Parliament was bending itself double before Henry Eighth, and the States General of France were only strong enough to yield a faint assent to all that Francis First might ask from them. The Commoners asked much more than Charles was willing to yield, and what he considered the extravagance of their demands provoked him to harsher meas-

ures than he had hitherto attempted. Of the three messengers, sent with these despatches from the Holy Council, one was seized and imprisoned on the way, and the other two never dared to approach the king. The Castilians heard from afar, that so fast as they were taken they should be slain "without trial or form of justice." But they were not yet to be disheartened. It was openly debated in the Council whether Charles should not be solemnly deposed, nay, whether Joanna should not now espouse some prince, who might govern Spain in her name. We need not wonder that the Commons never thought of governing themselves, for the principle of republicanism was impossible in their country and in their age. It was too late for them to retreat from the field on which so much was staked; it was too early to conquer all the liberties which belonged to them as men. In any event, they had need of prudence and energy and good faith, such as could alone make labor sure or success availing. Yet these do not seem to have universally or even generally belonged to the Commons. The circumstances, which had drawn them together in their necessity, did not keep them together through their trial. The impulse with which they started did not last them even half-way towards their shining and distant goal. The counsels of their wisest and the deeds of their bravest men were not long supported among themselves. "This flame," wrote

Peter Martyr, "will end in smoke, as I opine, because the heads of this mad Council, altogether wanting in experience, are already turning towards their own vain-glory." And "what they wish, they do not even understand; like to butterflies which waver through the air, uncertain whither they are flying." *

V.

The Constable-Regent of Castile set up the royal banners in October, and soon collected ten thousand men-at-arms led by the flower of the Castilian nobility, and commanded by his own son, the Count de Haro. The obstinacy of the Council in refusing the king's offers and putting forward their own claims, had already raised new enemies against the Communities. King Emanuel of Portugal, to whom the Commoners addressed themselves for countenance in their enterprise, sent a large sum of money, not to them but to the Cavaliers. The Castilian nobles, who thought their privileges in danger, now gave their support very freely to the Regents towards whom

* Peter Martyr. *Opus Epistolarum*. Ep. 713, 685.

some popular feeling was already inclining. On the other side, the Commoners were stirring actively. The Council called upon the Communities to furnish both forces and supplies, and succeeded in gathering ten or fifteen thousand men at Tordesillas; but there was little strength in such numbers, undisciplined and undirected. It is an especial point to be remembered in this brief history, that the chances of war, that is, of action, were always against the Commoners. Their infantry was composed of tradesmen, or workmen, or husbandmen, who scarcely knew how to carry their weapons properly,* and were in all ways unfit to bear any good part in open fields, however stoutly they could defend their thick-walled towns. The cavalry, then the best part of all armies, was, with the Commoners, hastily and feebly formed out of such cavaliers as fought for the people, and such stranger soldiers as fought for the people's pay. In the middle classes these wants of discipline and strength were made up by resolution and hearty spirit, but to the lower classes there was little help, because they had been too long degraded to be suddenly capable of prudent purpose, or even of simple self-protection. On the other hand, the Cavaliers, military in their very names, were strong

* *Juncterorum copix sunt rusticanæ, vomeribus et ligonibus per tractandis aptiores quam armis.*—*Peter Martyr, Ep. 705.*

in a force of veteran foot-soldiers, and were themselves enrolled in the cavalry of their excellent army. A great mistake was presently made by the leaders among the Commoners. Juan de Padilla, who had been foremost in all the previous adventures of the war, and who had become "the idol" of all Castile, was momentarily absent from the army. Jealous of his popularity, or blind to his superiority, the Council had him set aside in making choice of a commander. To one so disinterested and devoted as Padilla, another, whose character was made up of pride, choler, and treachery, was now preferred; and, not without clamor among the soldiers, Pedro Giron was chosen Captain-General of the Communities.

The resources of the Commoners seemed more abundant than they really were, apparently availing and pressing to instant service. The Cavaliers believed that present odds were against them, and sought delay in opening a conference with the Council. The Admiral-Regent met Pedro Laso and some other deputies at Torrelobaton, half way between Rio Seco, (the royal head-quarters,) and Tordesillas. They were six days together, but as the terms which the Admiral could offer, were much less than the Council had already demanded, they were firmly refused. In fact, the Regents had no sort of authority at this time, to make any conditions with the people in the king's name. So the conference at Torrelobaton broke

up; "pens and tongues," says the chronicler, "were all worn out," and,

"Wild trumpets were braying
Aloud for Castile."

All now depended upon strength and prudence in war. The cause which was to fail, was to fail for ever. Either royalty must give up something of its power, or liberty must be driven utterly out from Castile.

Already the balance was turning against the Communities. The nobles, on whom they had much depended, were deserting them. Worse still were bitter divisions among the Commoners themselves, which, though scarcely worth relating, were significant of failing enthusiasm. Some of the cities were inclining to accept the offers made to them, separately, by the Regents. Burgos, second only to Toledo in importance, but behind all others in independence of spirit, was gained by large promises, and opened her gates to the constable, (1st of November.) Valladolid was wavering between hope of gain with the Commoners and fear of loss from the Cavaliers. The Toledan troops incontinently deserted the army at Tordesillas, so soon as any other general than their own was set above them. But Padilla was true when other hearts were growing cold. He hastened from Toledo, met his troops and brought them back to their quarters, offering his obedience and theirs to the orders of Captain-General Giron.

The Holy Council was discordant and useless, as if its name had been the Unholy. Even Queen Joanna was sunk in deepest melancholy, and refused to sign the papers which were necessary to the Council's and the army's existence. It was easy to see that the red crosses of the Commoners would soon be abandoned for the white crosses of the Cavaliers.*

The king's troops, it must be remembered, were at Medina del Rio Seco, only twenty miles distant from the army of the Communities at Tordesillas. Towards the end of November, by the Council's orders, Captain-General Giron marched towards Rio Seco, and, after some slight skirmishes, took position within a few miles of the town. There he remained for two or three days, drawing out his troops, every morning, in battle array, and provoking the Cavaliers, within the walls, to come out and meet him, by frequent flourishes of artillery. But it so happened, that the Count de Haro was absent, and the Cavaliers were unwilling to venture anything until his return. So Pedro Giron's parades and the Bishop of Zamora's impatience,—the Bishop being now in the very van of the army,—and Padilla's resolutions were all spent in vain. When, at last, the Count de Haro was actually approaching with some reinforcements, Pedro

* These colors, white and red, distinguished the two parties during the war.

Giron drew off his army, *sin porqué, ni saber á que fin*, — without knowing why, or having any reason at all, as his soldiers said,—to Villalpando, a town some miles west of Medina, leaving the southern road to Tordesillas open to the enemy. Pedro Giron was *una cabeza llena de viento*, a windy-brained man, who belonged to a great family,* from whom he had been estranged by some affront put upon him by the king. While he was before Rio Seco, the Admiral, who knew him well, met him in secret interview, and persuaded him to betray the cause he had indifferently upheld; and it was in consequence of such an understanding with the Regents, that Giron now dragged away his forces, not only from Rio Seco but from Tordesillas. There, at Tordesillas, were Queen Joanna and the Council, that is, the whole government which the Communities possessed or obeyed, and to strike this down was like cutting off a hundred heads with one blow. The Count de Haro hurried over the deserted road from Rio Seco, and fell, at dusk, upon Tordesillas undefended, save by the Bishop of Zamora's regiment of priests, and a few men-at-arms. Some brave resistance was made by these, but the king's army was too numerous to be driven back, and the town was yielded. In dashed the Cavaliers, plundering, seizing, and slaying. Neither house nor church, neither man nor woman, was spared.

* He was the Constable's own nephew.

Nine or ten deputies of the Council were taken prisoners, while the rest escaped as they could by different ways. At midnight, the Count de Haro sought the queen and kissed her hand in sign of his reverent homage, but she was quite bewildered, heedless of friend and foe, and, indeed, to her the Cavaliers' triumph or the Commoners' could bring but little joy. All the while, the Commoners were at Villalpando, so bound by their general's treachery, that never hand nor foot was moved to save their queen, their Council and themselves from ruin. If they had but followed Padilla !

The deputies of the Council, escaped from Tordesillas, were soon reassembled at Valladolid, whither also the Commoners marched from Villalpando. Pedro Giron, "fatigued with his command," disappeared, and the troops remained for some time without any General. Valladolid became a scene, as Sandoval wrote, of "massacre and bloodshed, and robbery, and barbarity," and the whole kingdom was struggling with "hunger, fire, and steel." * The year was ending in disastrous confusion. Neither the Council nor the Regency were able to hinder the abuses of war, and the description of a contemporary writer (Guevara) was bitterly true: "things being come to such a pass that there are no roads secure, no

* Peter Martyr's words are these: "Fame, flamma, ferro, Regna ruunt regia." (*Epist.* 679.)

temples respected, no men to plough the fields, none to supply the common means of subsistence, none to execute justice, none even who are safe in their own dwellings, insomuch as all proclaim the king, and all refuse to obey the king."*

The hopes of the Communities rested upon Juan de Padilla. He was received at Valladolid as gladly as if he had been "father to the whole people." A few skirmishes with the Cavaliers, of no other importance than that the energies of the Commoners were kept alive by action, happened towards the close of the year. Padilla, followed closely by the Bishop of Zamora, was foremost in every adventure, not only leading his men to fight bravely, but, what was strange in that war, teaching them to spare nobly, when the fight was won. His gallantry of heart and arm was not without its reward, and, early in the new year (1521), he was chosen Captain-General of the Commoners. The superior authority amongst his companions had fallen to him since the desertion of Pedro Giron, but when the day of a new election was fixed at Valladolid, Padilla was the first to propose another General than himself, and was, of all others, the most ready to acknowledge the claims which Pedro Laso, an older but a weaker

* The account given by Peter Martyr, is the same. "Ad sicariorum manus jam res deducitur . . . Audet exire nemo; Vineæ culturæque deseruntur; trucidantur in agris ruricolæ; nil tutum est; ad arma conclamatur quotidie." (*Epist.* 709.)

man, put forward to the chief command. The citizens' favor and the soldiers' love belonged entirely to Padilla, and when it was but whispered that the Council inclined towards Laso, tumultuous crowds began to gather about the hall of session. Padilla instantly came out and declared that he himself was first in voting for his rival, but this generosity so warmed all hearts to enthusiasm, that the council was obliged to promise the election which troops and people demanded with threats and outcries. Pedro Laso, who had been exceedingly active in his own favor, was grievously affronted by such a failure, and not long after went over to the Regent's side, leaving his old companions to do what they could under the Captain-General they had preferred to him.

Little by little, Padilla strove to prop up the cause, which was really falling, and, notwithstanding the loss of Pedro Laso's countenance, some signs of promise to the Commoners came with the new year. Padilla was not without hearty aid. Juan Bravo, of Segovia, and Francisco Maldonado, of Salamanca, both deserve to be regarded as his tried and trusty friends. The Bishop of Zamora was wandering in arms from city to city, preaching a crusade against Cavaliers and Regents and Kings. He went to Toledo, and the people declared that they would have him for their Archbishop, *como si fueran unos Papas*, just as if they had been popes, exclaims the old historian.

Toledo, proud of Padilla, was submissive to all his demands for aid, and even to the measures of support, which were taken by his wife, Maria Pacheco. Burgos was wavering back towards her sister communities, and all the neighboring country, in the north, was risen in arms under the Count de Salvatierra, a furious and vindictive man, who had joined the Commoners from motives of utter selfishness, but who was still doing good service to their cause. Some new dispatches from Charles to the Cavaliers arrived in the early part of the year, but the promises they bore to the Commoners were like oil poured upon wild fires.*

Torrelobaton, a well-fortified town, commanded the only open communication between Burgos, the head-quarters of the Constable, and Tordesillas, the head-quarters of the Admiral.† In both one place and the other, preparations of war against the Commoners were rapidly going forward, and it was, of course, a great object with Padilla to interrupt the plans of his enemies. In the latter part of February, he ordered out his whole force

* Yet even these flaming fires (*tanti ignes flammantes*) were kindled with such "straws" as would soon burn out. "*Fumi sunt hi paleares, qui licet naribus sint molesti, quia fœtidi, ad capitisque apti gravedinem, propere tamen dissolvuntur.*" So writes Peter Martyr, *Ep.* 686.

† The main road was blocked up by Valladolid, occupied, it will be remembered, by the Commoners. The Royal Council was with the Constable at Burgos; Cardinal Adrian was at Tordesillas, with the Admiral.

from Valladolid, and marched directly against Torrelobaton, which was then defended by five or six hundred Cavaliers. For ten days there was continued fighting about the town, and still no other attempt in succor of the Cavaliers was made, than the sudden advance and equally sudden retreat of the Count de Haro with a thousand lances. The host of Commoners prevailed, and fell upon the town like beasts upon long-hunted prey. Padilla lost all power over his troops even in this his greatest victory, and, gorged with booty and blood, they deserted him by hundreds. A truce was declared for eight days, at the entreaty of the Cavaliers, who began to look upon the war as one of very doubtful issue. During the time of the truce, a meeting was arranged at a neighboring town, between the leaders of either army, but Padilla had no sooner arrived at the appointed place, than some friend among the Cavaliers warned him of a plot for his assassination, and he rode speedily back, leaving the chances of conference untried. The victory at Torrelobaton was worse than any defeat could have been to the Commoners. Padilla's soldiers left him to carry home their plunder and their glory. He was quite unable to engage in any adventures of importance, and though Sandoval calls him "another Hannibal in Capua," his inaction is quite as easily understood as the great Carthaginian's. But though left almost alone, Padilla stood firm, and

refused the overtures that were made to him by the Admiral, at the very moment when the Communities were on the brink of deep and fearful ruin.

On both sides, however, there was, at this period of the war, great want both of resources and enterprise. The Cavaliers were hardly able to keep together any considerable forces, and were even reduced to sell their plate in order to pay the arrears of their soldiers. The Commoners, who had little plate to sell, tried other means, and at Valladolid the magistrates ordered the gates to be shut, while they plundered the chief monastery in the city of six thousand ducats, or about forty-five thousand dollars. A strange scene was enacted at Toledo, under the direction of Maria Pacheco, Padilla's wife. She herself, clothed in deepest mourning, and walking upon her knees, crept, with tears and signs of lamentation, into the Cathedral sacristy, and took away all the treasures it contained. So the "dance of the Commoners," as the war is called by a contemporary chronicler, continued; but it was a dance of death, even to the lookers on.

One of the Council's messengers to the king now returned with hot-headed stories of the dangers he had met on his way, and endeavored to make himself important at the expense of the people's peace. He was a foolish monk, named Fray Pablo, and it was very probably by his own doing that there appeared a proclamation, posted at night in the

great square of Valladolid, directed in the king's name against all the Castilian Communities, in general, and against no less than five hundred Commoners, in particular. This was great aggravation to the populace, but they were relieved, the next day, by a public ceremony, in which the Council played the chief parts, among a throng of musicians, heralds, citizens and soldiers. In their presence was proclaimed judgment upon Regents, royal Councillors and Cavaliers, as guilty of cruelty and treachery. At almost the same time, a letter from the Cardinal Regent to the king was intercepted, in which good old Adrian counselled his master to favor the Commoners' just demands rather than trust to the Cavaliers' doubtful obedience. So the Commoners were again encouraged. But the day of the king's triumph and the people's defeat was close at hand.

On the twenty-first of April, the Regents joined their forces at Peñaflor, a few miles to the north-east of Torrelobaton. On the next day, the royal troops, ten thousand in number, were reviewed in the Regents' presence, and were then set in march against the wasted army of the Commoners. Juan de Padilla was in no condition to await the Cavaliers, so much more numerous and better disciplined than his own soldiers,* and he at once

* "Proceribus [the Cavaliers] equitum nobilium copia ingens, Juncteris [the Commoners] fere nulla et ea bellorum experts."—*Peter Martyr. Ep.* 720.

determined to retreat, eighteen miles, to Toro, where he might meet some promised reinforcements, or whence, in their failure, he might press on towards Salamanca. At all events, it was necessary for him to avoid decisive action. The war between Charles the Emperor and Francis of France was already begun, and French troops were marching into Navarre. Could Padilla have saved his forces, until the Regents' army was drawn away to meet this northern invasion, the cause of the Communities might have triumphed in the end.

His orders to retreat from Torrelobaton were given in the early morning of the twenty-third of April. A priest, breakfasting at the General's table, suddenly cried out, "It hath been revealed to me that on such a day as this, the Cavaliers shall conquer, and the Commoners shall fall; so go not forth from the town." "Peace!" replied Padilla solemnly, "and pray to God, in whose name I have devoted my life to the welfare of these kingdoms, for now there is no time to stay." The signs in which that stout heart trusted, were of higher nature than belonged to a priest's dreams. To him, surely,

"The best of omens was his country's cause,"

and to that he gave himself in defeat or victory. Before dawn, the Commoners were on their march towards Toro. The retreat was perfectly ordered by Padilla, who placed himself at the head of all

his cavalry, in the rear. The enemy was soon in hot pursuit, attacking the retreating army wherever it was most exposed, yet everywhere meeting with manful and orderly resistance. The Count de Haro, at length, came up himself with three or four thousand horse, a force much superior in strength to the whole army of Commoners. At Villalar, six miles from Torrelobaton, the vanguard of Padilla's march, wearied and despairing, began to waver. The mud was deep upon the ground, and a heavy rain drove full in the soldiers' faces as they struggled on. So soon as the Count de Haro saw signs of disorder in the broken ranks before him, he ordered his artillery to open its fire and his infantry to engage directly with the Commoners. Padilla's troops were scattered about the narrow plain, like fallen leaves. He would have gathered and encouraged them :

“ Then in the name of God and all these rights,
Advance your standards, draw your willing swords :
For me, the ransom of my bold attempt
Shall be this cold corse on the earth's cold face ;
But if I thrive, the gain of my attempt
The least of you shall bear his part thereof.”

But his words and his deeds were equally spent in vain. His cannoneers deserted their guns, and his infantry fled, tearing their red crosses from their breasts, without spirit enough to save their own lives. Still, and alone, the horsemen, the best of that poor army, fought bravely, following behind Padilla, who spurred his steed and waved

his arms against the shouting Cavaliers. But the day was lost, and the horsemen, too, rode fast away. Then Padilla, crying "St. James and Liberty!" plunged, with five chosen companions, into the fast-ebbing fight. Alone he dared to brave the host that his whole army had feared, but his lance was soon broken, he was himself severely wounded, and so fell at last into the hands of his enemies. Scarcely had he yielded his blunted sword, when one of the bystanders, now crowding around him, thrust a dagger's point into the open bars of Padilla's helmet, but the wound was slighter than the shame of so hateful a deed. Bravo of Segovia, and Maldonado of Salamanca, Padilla's faithful fellow-soldiers, were taken with him. More than a thousand Commons were made prisoners, and five hundred, at least, lay slaughtered like sheep upon the field. The battle of Villalar was "a mortal blow," and the war of the Communities was at an end, in a little more than a year from the time of its beginning.

VI.

In the night following the unhappy day of Villalar, Padilla, Bravo and Maldonado were condemned to death on the morrow. No form of common justice was allowed to protect them, and all unavailing was the Constable's generous counsel that the king's will should be consulted before the prisoners were executed. Death could not have been unwelcome to Padilla, now that his hopes were dead before him. His last hours were occupied with his nearest duties towards home and towards those who made home dear. "To thee, crown of Spain," he wrote to Toledo,* "to thee, light of the world, thy legitimate son declares that his very joyful consolation is dying for thee here." "If your grief," he wrote to his wife, "did not trouble me more than my own death, I should consider myself to be most entirely fortunate. . . In your keeping I leave my heart, and do you still cherish it as that which most dearly loved you." His father was still alive to mourn his son buried before him, but the father belonged to the triumphant Cavaliers, and "to him," said Padilla in the same letter for his wife, "to him I do not

* These letters of Padilla will be found at the end.

write because I dare not ; for, though I was his son in risking this loss of life, I have not been his heir in good fortune." As if the greatest upon earth might not have been proud of such a son ! Padilla would have made his last testament, but even a notary's assistance was denied him, and it was only at his renewed entreaties that he was allowed to have a confessor, and with him the rest of that last night was spent in preparation and prayer.

In the morning, Padilla and his companions were led out to execution. A herald walked on before, proclaiming them to be condemned traitors, but Bravo called out fiercely that the herald, and they who sent him, lied. "Traitors ! no !" cried the warm-hearted Commoner, "but lovers of the people's weal, and defenders of the nation's liberty." He was struck with a staff by one of the magistrates and ordered to be silent, while Padilla turned to him, and calmed all his passion, by saying, "Yesterday, Juan Bravo, we had to fight like knights, but, to-day, we have to die like Christians." When the prisoners were bound to be executed, there arose amongst them almost a dispute as to who should be the first to die. "Me," exclaimed Bravo, "despatch me, that I may not behold the death of the best knight in Castile !" and, as he asked, he was first executed. Padilla waited only to put in a bystander's hands some last token for his wife, then bowed his head

to the executioner, murmuring, as his eyes fell upon Bravo's corpse, "Ah! you are there, good knight!" and dying a serene and noble sacrifice.

"Here Padilla died,
Martyr to Freedom. If thou dost love
Her cause, stand then as at an altar here,
And thank the Almighty that thine honest heart,
Full of a brother's feelings for mankind,
Rebels against oppression."

After Padilla, Maldonado was executed, "and so," says the historian, "the troubles of these three were ended." "Like the furious current of a sudden whirlwind," as the same one adds, "the war passed by, and was done." It was cutting the stoutest mast away to strike Padilla down; the sails loosened, the cords cracked, and the wreck was utter ruin.

The Council fled from Valladolid and disappeared "like smoke in the air." Valladolid, itself, terrified at the Cavaliers' approach, did not even dare to ring its great bell, but sought pardon by complete submission. As the surrender of such a principal city would be an example to all others, the Regents granted it favorable terms of peace, excepting only eighteen Commoners who had been most forward in past seditions; but only two of these eighteen were executed, the others making their escape without being pursued. Four days after the battle of Villalar, the royal troops made their entry into the city with great parade,

yet all wasted upon the citizens, who kept doors and windows closed, either through fear or through resolution. But the submission of Valladolid and the clemency with which it was received, were more sufficient than armies could have been, in bringing back Castile to its allegiance. One after another the cities opened their gates and laid down their arms.

The Count de Salvatierra, taken while still struggling against the Cavaliers, was imprisoned at Burgos, where, some years after, he died.* Bishop Antonio, of Zamora, just rejoicing in the Toledo archbishopric, was forced to escape in disguise from all his dignities, and then was taken on his flight. His castle of Fermosel, in the north, was one of the last strongholds surrendered to the Cavaliers. The Bishop relieved himself by killing his jailor, at Simancas, and getting out of prison, but he was soon put in again, and, two years afterwards, was condemned to death by Alcalde Ronquillo, at that time appointed by brief from the pope to judge all priests and friars, who had taken part in the war against the king.

* There is a pleasant story told of Salvatierra's son, that, while his father was lying in prison, he sold his horse to give the old Count food and clothes. The boy was then a page in the royal service, and what he had done being reported at court, he was presently called to account by the king himself. "I sold my horse," said young Salvatierra, "to give my father food." Charles was in one of his royal humors, and ordered his page to be presented with enough to buy two horses in place of the one he had sold.

Neither Pedro Giron nor Pedro Laso received any reward for the treachery they had done to the Communities, and their disappearance from the chronicles we read, is the only comfort to be had in those days of despair.

The spirit of Castile sank and fell with Padilla. In all parts of Spain the people were now abandoning their hopes and liberties. Only Toledo stood firm, sustained yet a little while longer by the fortitude of a widowed and desolate woman. Maria Pacheco was faithful to the cause for which her husband had perished. Hostile chroniclers declare her to have been ambitious, vain, and inhuman, nor do they hesitate to charge her with following out her evil courses by the help of sorcery. One calls her "the tyranness of Toledo;" another, "a firebrand to the whole kingdom;" but such names it was unmanly to give, and we will believe them not. The truth is, that Maria Pacheco, a woman of passionate nature, gave her whole heart to the great purposes of her lord, and would have supported them with more than woman's enthusiasm. If her miseries made her mad, at last, if she forgot the gentleness of spirit which should have been her handmaid, and yielded herself to the fiercer companionship of despair, she does not therefore deserve that we look upon her as proud, or ignorant, or ferocious. Her story is one of the extremities to which the Commoners of her day were driven, even against their will.

When the news of Padilla's death was brought to Toledo, his wife, clad in mourning robes and bearing her young child, went forth among the people, to whom it seemed that she was the one to inherit her husband's influence, and they "acknowledged her not as a woman," writes the sneering chronicler, "but as a hero." She accepted the inheritance as a duty, though with what hopes of defending Toledo against the whole strength of Spain it is not easy to comprehend. She may have been encouraged by the French invasion of Navarre, or by the rebellion against the nobility which still existed in Valencia and Majorca; but on whatever else she depended, to one resolution she clung fast, of keeping her home and Padilla's free from the Cavaliers. She opened a correspondence with many of the Castilian cities, and even wrote to the French general in the north. Nor did she neglect to keep alive the dying spirit of Toledo. She ordered crucifixes to be borne before her soldiers; and at her own side was carried a painted effigy of her husband, headless and bleeding on his scaffold. She took possession of the Alcazar, or citadel, and, summoning the assistance of a few faithful councillors, among whom we meet, again, with Hernando de Avalos, Maria Pacheco bade defiance to King, Regents and Cavaliers. Although troops were instantly sent against Toledo, this hero-woman defended her townspeople for many long months, in spite of their

wasting numbers and failing energies. The Regents sought to have her person seized, but the Toledans were not yet so faint-hearted as to abandon her. Yet pardon and possession of ancient privileges being soon assured them by the king, their resolutions were forgotten, and their city was surrendered, (February, 1522.)* Then, when all was over, she who had secured the people's safety by forcing them to self-protection, fled away in disguise. The wife and son of Padilla could find no place of refuge in Spain, but hid themselves in Portugal, where, not long after, they died in want and suffering. The house, which had been their home and Padilla's, in Toledo, was, by the king's order, razed to the ground, and a pillar of stone, to Padilla's glory rather than his shame, was set to mark the empty space. The pillar is fallen, but the uncovered ground is still the home of warm associations, forever dwelling with the name of Juan de Padilla.

Charles the Emperor, everywhere triumphant, in France, in Italy, and in Germany, returned to Spain in the summer of 1522. He was welcomed with demonstrations of great joy by all parties and all classes among his people. Peace and

* Some say that the clergy of Toledo, offended by the plunder of their cathedral-treasures, were chief aiders and abettors in this surrender; but the subdued and wearied people were much more likely to have acted here for themselves.

submission were already established throughout his kingdom, and neither would be disturbed by him. Rebellion in Castile had kept him tyrannical, but triumph over Castile now made him merciful. "Enough," he said, soon after his return, "enough, let no more blood be shed in Spain." Only the most turbulent Commoners were marked out for punishment, and some among these were saved or permitted to save themselves. Hernando de Avalos, who had gone into exile with Padilla's widow, returned, after her death, and was seen in disguise at Court, where he was naturally attracted by hope of pardon. Charles was told by one of his busy courtiers, that Avalos was near and might be taken. "Better tell Avalos to escape," replied right royally the king, "than inform me of his being in my power."

Three months after (Oct. 1522) Charles's return, a proclamation of pardon to all Castile was made in his name and in his presence, upon the great square of Valladolid, that square of many different scenes. "Considering the ancient loyalty of these kingdoms, and the great and famous deeds which their native people have performed . . . and regarding that the people, knowing their errors, have now returned to obedience . . . and desiring that all the subjects and natives of the kingdom may now and henceforward live in tranquillity and peace, and that they may love the king with perfect love, and be bound in greater

duty to serve him: . . . Therefore, of his own will, sure knowledge, deliberate pleasure and absolute power, the king doth pardon and absolve, now and forever, all the cities and towns of Castile from all the crimes and excesses, greater or less, as many as have been committed and done, from the beginning of the year 1520, until this present day." This was the plan of pardon, and all its succeeding details were worthy of such a beginning. A great festival followed at Valladolid, in which the king himself took part, rejoicing that his subjects were bound to him again, and those subjects, too, rejoicing that their deeds, brave or violent, were forgiven them.

Here Sandoval, a Spanish historian, who has been at our side throughout the war, draws a long breath, and says: "I come, as one who has sailed afar, tossed by the waves and broken by the worse than civil commotions of my country, to the fortunate port and fair weather of a glorious reign."

And most men, who have been called historians, would say the same thing of Charles the Fifth's reign, that it was great and glorious to himself and to his people. But such things shall be said no longer. Dominion is given to man over his fellow-men, not that the weaker may be crushed, nor that the stronger may trample, iron-heeled, upon human rights and human lives, but

that the stronger may make his power dear even to the weaker, by its justice and its charity. Charles of Spain declared the principles by which he meant to reign, when he pronounced the deputies of the "Holy Council" to be traitors, ordering them and the Commoners to death without delay of trial, *anulando las leyes en contrario, usando de su poderio real absoluto, como señor natural de estos reinos*, annulling all contrary laws by virtue of his absolute royal power as natural lord of Castile. Such principles as lay, seen or unseen, in this declaration, were not the principles, for whose sake monarchy was acknowledged as necessary to human government in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Kings' and Emperors' responsibilities rested upon higher duties than victories abroad or triumphs at home; their offices on earth were not completed by binding in chains and tears, the subjects intrusted them by God. Unrighteous, however, as they often were, those earthly sovereigns were still, unconsciously, fulfilling the holy purposes of Providence, and resistance to their power, while it endured, was impossible. So did the Commoners of 1520 fail in rebellion against their king. The freedom they sought at the sword's point, would have been more surely won in patience and in peace. Any great work of man must be prepared before it can be sustained; but the Commoners scarcely knew what they were about at any time, and their

liberties were more injured by themselves than they could have been, perhaps, even by absolute Charles. A revolution will never succeed, — such testimony all history bears, — if it have no other supports than frenzy or bloodshed.* Among the Commoners there was not only want of understanding and preparation, but quite as much want of union and good faith. Where one was earnest like Padilla, many another was false like Pedro Giron. It was a great cause that they upheld, but it needed stouter arms and truer hearts, and gentler means and better times than theirs. Peace to the fallen !

From the day of Villalar, the course of Castilian history is changed. The spirit of the early Christians, whom we followed to the mountains, abandoned their descendants, whom we are leaving on the southern plains. Soldiers drew their swords, henceforward, for royalty and not for liberty. Historians repeated the glories of kings, and not of nations. Philosophers devoted their contemplations to the powers of sovereignty, rather than to the rights of subjects. Even poets sang of any other thing than the memories and the hopes of freemen. Deeper and darker have been the shades so long fallen upon Spain, deeper and darker

* "Revolutions, which are brought on by general distress, in attempting to remedy it, usually destroy the foundations of a permanent free constitution, and, after horrible convulsions, have almost always ended in despotism." — *Niebuhr, Hist. of Rome, Vol. II.*

every year, even when the majesty of her name has been most universal.

“ Yet, freedom, yet thy banner torn, but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm against the wind ;
Thy trumpet-voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind ! ”

To that “ trumpet-voice ” the world will never shut its ears, nor, while we hear its most distant echoes, will we doubt the coming to Spain of serener liberties than those for which Juan de Padilla died.

LETTERS OF PADILLA.

See page 264.

Carta de Juan de Padilla para su Muger.

Señora, Si vuestra pena no me lastimara mas que mi muerte, yo me tuviera enteramente por bien aventurado. Que siendo á todos tan cierta, señalado bien hace Dios al que la da tal, aunque sea de muchos plañida, y del recibida en algun servicio. Quisiera tener mas espacio del que tengo para escribiros algunas cosas para vuestro consuelo: ni á mi me lo dan, ni yo querria mas dilacion en recibir la corona que espero. Vos, Señora, como cuerda llora vuestra desdicha, y no mi muerte que siendo ella tan justa de nadie deve ser llorada. Mi anima, pues ya otra cosa no tengo, dejo en vuestras manos. Vos, Señora, lo haced con ella, como con la cosa que mas os quiso. A Pero Lopez mi señor [padre] no escrivo porque no oso, que aunque fui su hijo en osar perder la vida, no fui su heredero en la ventura. No quiero mas dilatar por no dar pena al verdugo que me espera, y por no dar sospecha que por alargar la vida, alargo la carta. Mi criado Sossa, como testigo de vista, e de lo secreto de mi voluntad, os dira lo demas que aqui falta, y asi quedo dejando esta pena, esperando el cuchillo de vuestro dolor y de mi descanso.

Otra Carta de Juan de Padilla á la Ciudad de Toledo.

A ti Corona de España y luz del todo el mundo: desde los altos Godos muy libertada. A ti que por derramamientos de sangres estrañas como de las tuyas cobraste libertad para ti e para tus vecinas ciudades. Tu legitimo hijo Juan de Padilla te hago saber como con la sangre de mi cuerpo se refrescan tus vittorias antepasadas. Si mi ventura no me dejó poner mis hechos entre tus nombradas hazañas, la culpa fue en mi mala dicha, y no en mi buena voluntad. La qual como á madre te requiero me recibas, pues Dios no me dió mas que perder por ti de lo quo aventuré. Mas me pesa de tu sentimiento que de mi vida. Pero mira que son veces de la fortuna, que jamás tienen sosiego. Solo voy con un consuelo muy alegre, que yo el menor de los tuyos muero por ti: e que tu has

criado á tus pechos á quien podría tomar emienda de mi agravio. Muchos lenguas habrá que mi muerte contarán, que aun yo no la sé, aunque la tengo bien cerca. Mi fin te dará testimonio de mi deseo. Mi anima te encomiendo como patrona de la Christianidad; del cuerpo no digo nada, pues ya no es mio, ni puedo mas escribir, porque al punto que esta acabado, tengo á la garganta el cuchillo, con mas pasion de tu enojo que temor de mi pena.

[OF THESE LETTERS THE TRANSLATIONS FOLLOW.]

Juan de Padilla to his Wife.

Wife, if your grief did not trouble me more than my own death, I should consider myself to be most entirely fortunate. For since death is so sure to all men, God shows greatest favor to him who meets such a death as mine; if, although it be much deplored on earth, it may be accepted as some service by Him. I wish that I had more time than I have to write you something for your consolation; but this is not given me, nor would I ask any longer delay in receiving the crown I hope for. You, wife, may reasonably mourn over your own loss, but not over my death, which is too honorable to be mourned by any one. I leave my heart, and I have nothing else, now, to leave, in your keeping; and do you, wife, still cherish it as that which most dearly loved you. To Pero Lopez, to my father, I do not write, because I dare not; for although I was his son in risking this loss of life, I have not been his heir in good fortune. I will say no more, lest I trouble the executioner who now waits for me, and lest I should be suspected of lengthening my letter for the sake of lengthening my life. My servant Sossa, who will have seen all that has happened, and will be acquainted with all my secret desires, will tell you what is here wanting; and so I break off, ending this grief, at least, and waiting the knife which will be the instrument of your sorrow and of my repose."

Juan de Padilla to the City of Toledo.

"To thee, crown of Spain and light of the whole world, free from the great Goths' time: to thee, that hast won freedom for thyself and for thy neighboring cities, by lavishing both stranger blood and thy own. I, thy legitimate son, Juan de Padilla, do now make thee know how thy past victories may be refreshed with the blood of my

body. If I have not been permitted by success to set up my own deeds amongst all thy recorded glories, the fault was in my bad fortune and not in my good will ; which last I implore thee as a mother to accept, since God hath given me no more to lose than what I had already risked for thee. I am more troubled about thy resentment than about my life ; yet these are but the changes of fortune which never cease. I go with the very joyful consolation that I, the least of thy children, am dying for thee, and that there is some one nourished at thy bosom who will make amends for my failure. There will be many tongues to tell of this death, of which I do not yet, myself, know all, although it be very near to me ; but my end will bear witness to thee of my desires. I commend my spirit to thee as to the patroness of Christendom ; of my body I say nothing, as it is no longer mine ; nor can I write anything more, for, at the moment just ended, I have the knife upon my throat, yet with more sorrow for thy disappointment than fear of my own suffering."

END.

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